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In Search of a Better Life: A History of Korean Migration to Cape Town

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A minor dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
award of the degree of Master of Arts in Historical Studies

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COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

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Abstract

This study records and interprets the history and meanings of Korean migration to South Africa, especially Cape Town, from 1990 to 2011. Korean immigrants in South Africa came to establish a better life. This lead to my central project question: *What does a 'better life' mean to Korean immigrants in South Africa?* To answer this question, I have investigated Korean immigrants' motivations for migrating, family decision-making and their life experiences in South Africa. To do so, I conducted oral history interviews with 22 Korean immigrants, and surveys with 67 immigrant households in Cape Town in 2011.

I argue that Korean immigrants in Cape Town define a 'better life' in terms of personal values, rather than material ones. While Koreans (in Korea) tend to sacrifice their quality of life to pursue material values at all cost, some people were forced to or voluntarily found a new way of life against the backdrop of the economic insecurity in Korea. Korean immigrants in South Africa achieved primary human values such as harmony, tolerance and trust in their relationships with other people in South Africa. In spite of language barriers, cultural differences and racial discrimination, this case study finds that Korean immigrants are generally content with their lives in Cape Town because they have discovered freedom while they established their new identities in a new society. They have created a 'third space' in South Africa, in which they have selected the very best aspects of life and chosen to regard it as progress.

However, despite these positive perspectives, many Korean immigrants feel alienated from both Korean and South African societies, since their progress has not been recognized. They strongly retain their Korean identity in South Africa, feeling nervous about their future since this often manifests as indecision about whether to stay or leave.

CHAPTER 1. Introduction

1.1. Historical background: Korean immigrants in South Africa

There are approximately 4,060 South Koreans (herein after referred to as Koreans) living in South Africa as of May 2011. Of these people, 2,000 people reside in Gauteng, 1,500 in the Western Cape and 500 in KwaZulu-Natal and other provinces.¹ The population is relatively small when compared to the total population of overseas Koreans² which is said to be 7.2 million in over 140 countries.³ However, considering that the two countries have never forged a noteworthy political or economic relationship with each other, it is unsurprising that there are few Korean immigrants residing in South Africa.

Before continuing, a brief caveat is needed; the number of Korean immigrants only refers to South Korean immigrants and I do not include North Korean immigrants in this study. Even though many South Africans know of the two Koreas, since North Koreans have severe restrictions on their political and economic freedoms⁴, there has been no independent immigration from North Korea to South Africa. However, Reuters

¹ The data is available at the website of the Korean embassy in South Africa, <http://zaf.mofat.go.kr>

² Overseas Koreans include the citizens of other countries such as Korean South African, Korean American in addition to Korean nationals who have residence permits in other countries.

³ The data is available at the website of Overseas Koreans foundation, www.korean.net

⁴ Seok, K. (2007). Our issue: North Korea. Amnesty USA. Retrieved from www.amnestyusa.org

reported just before the 2010 World Cup that there were more than 1,000 North Koreans working in South African World Cup stadiums countrywide.⁵ That said, my personal trepidations surrounding North Korea played a role in excluding North Korea from consideration in this study. I have lived in Seoul since 1976, before coming to study in Cape Town in 2010. I received an anticommunist education during primary school, when there was an anticommunist military regime in South Korea. In addition, there have been continuous abductions by the North Korean government in other countries during and after the Cold War.⁶ I, therefore, do not feel safe or secure investigating the lives of North Koreans in South Africa.

The first connection between South Africa and Korea was the South African Air Force 'Flying Cheetahs', which participated in the Korean War 1950-1953 as part of the United Nations forces. There is some South African literature about the war, which provides insight into the way South Africans first encountered Koreans during the war. Scott Shaw was shocked at being confronted with Koreans who were literally dying of hunger.⁷ He recalled the brutalities of war and it made him ascribe the realities of Koreans' lives to oriental fatalism during his service in Korea.⁸ His family and friends

⁵ Reuters. (2010). 'North Koreans working at SWC stadiums', 15th March

⁶ Williams, B. and Mobrand, E. (2010). Explaining divergent responses to the North Korean abductions issue in Japan and South Korea. *The journal of Asian studies*, 69 (2): 507-536

⁷ Shaw, S.C. (1973). *Looking back with laughter: The saga of a South African student, soldier and skipilot in Korea*. Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, p. 44

⁸ Ibid

in South Africa sent some gifts to comfort the needy Korean children.⁹ This might be one of the first relationships between the Korean and South African people. Brent mentions some Korean assistants who helped the South African Air Forces during the Korean War.¹⁰ However, there is no evidence of Koreans migrating to South Africa during and just after the Korean War.¹¹

In the 1960s, the Korean government started establishing diplomatic relationships with African countries such as Cameroon, Niger and Chad, after these countries achieved their independence from Europe.¹² However, South Africa was excluded due to the growing opposition against the Apartheid regime in the international community and the United Nations.¹³ Although the Korean government was not willing to establish official relations with South Africa at this time, it did not deter people from emigrating in order to seek opportunities in the country.

An employee of the Korean trading company called Kook-je sang sa is believed to have been the first Korean immigrant to South Africa. Yoo entered South Africa in 1977 as a branch manager of the company in Johannesburg.¹⁴ This all occurred during a

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Brent, W. (2001). *Flying Cheetahs: Korea 1950-1953*. South Africa: Freeworld publications.

¹¹ Brent, W. (2001). *Flying Cheetahs: Korea 1950-1953*. South Africa: Freeworld publications, p. 113.

¹² The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Korea. (2009). *60 years of Korean diplomacy (in English)*, Seoul: Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Jeon, KS. (1996). *Korean in the world: Middle-East and Africa*, *Korean in the world series 9 (in English)*. Korea: Ministry of Unification, p. 187.

political and economic climate of isolation, following the Soweto uprising and death of Steve Biko which resulted in the first mandatory United Nations sanctions.¹⁵ Yoo returned to Korea when the Korean government ordered the withdrawal of all employees from South Africa, but he came back and acquired permanent residency in 1980.¹⁶ He resided in South Africa until the late 1990s before going to the United States for his children's education.¹⁷ However, considering the earlier migration from the neighboring countries of Korea, China and Japan, it is appropriate to approach this story with a healthy degree of skepticism; it is likely that Koreans settled in South Africa before 1977.

Yap and Man record that a sugar company in Natal brought over few Chinese people from Java to cultivate sugar cane in 1858.¹⁸ Osada argues that one of the first Japanese businesspeople who settled in South Africa, arrived in Cape Town with his wife in 1898, meeting three more Japanese shortly after who had already been there for some time.¹⁹ As we can see in the cases of Japan and China, it is almost impossible to figure out who the first immigrant in a country was. It is partly due to the fact that the

¹⁵ Osada, M. (2002). *Sanctions and honorary white: Diplomatic policies and economic realities in relations*, USA: Greenwood press, p. 63.

¹⁶ Jeon, KS. (1996). *Korean in the world: Middle-East and Africa*, *Korean in the world series 9* (in English). Korea: Ministry of Unification, p. 187.

¹⁷ Jeon, KS. (1996). *Korean in the world: Middle-East and Africa*, *Korean in the world series 9* (in English). Korea: Ministry of Unification, p. 88.

¹⁸ Yap, M and Man, DL. (1996). *Colour, confusion, concession.: The history of the Chinese in South Africa*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University press

¹⁹ Osada, M. (2002). *Sanctions and honorary white: Diplomatic policies and economic realities in relations*, USA: Greenwood press.

passport system and national alien control were not effective before World War I²⁰ and did not prevent people from moving to other countries. Without such records, we have no way of knowing when and why they migrated.

After Kook-je sang sa expanded its business to Southern Africa, Daewoo sent its employees to start business in South Africa in 1985²¹, Ssang-Yong in 1986, Samsung in 1988 and LG in 1989.²² It was not just big companies that sent personnel to South Africa, but small to medium sized companies also took this opportunity. For instance, Nina wig production and Sinna shoemakers did the same in 1991.²³ The Korean embassy in South Africa says there are approximately 20 branches of Korean companies running their businesses in South Africa as of September 2011.²⁴

It was not only businesses which saw the opportunities in South Africa, but also missionaries and seminary students. Jeong and Kim studied for their doctorates in theology at Potchefstroom during the late 1970s and the early 1980s.²⁵ Kim warmly recalled his experiences in Potchefstroom in an interview with Busan Ilbo in 2009. He

²⁰ Rystad, G. (1992). Immigration history and the future of international migration, *International migration review*, 26 (4): 1168-1199, p.1171.

²¹ Segye Ilbo. (2002). 'Korean in South Africa'. 8th August and Lee, KG. (2000). *Overseas Koreans (in English)*. Korea: Seoul National University Press, p. 230.

²² Yoon. (1995). 'Korea-South Africa starting the era of cooperation'. Mail Kyungjae (economic daily). 6th July.

²³ Jeon, KS. (1996). *Korean in the world: Middle-East and Africa, Korean in the world series 9 (in English)*. Korea: Ministry of Unification, p. 191

²⁴ Retrieved from www.zaf.mofat.go.kr

²⁵ Kang, WT. (2009). 'The Interview with chancellor Kim Sung-Su, the chancellor of the Kosin Univerity', Busan Ilbo, 9th June.

was provided with scholarships, medical care and living expenses by the university during his doctoral studies, indicating that South Africa was on par with the standards of the European education system at this time.²⁶ Jeon also mentions the presence of three or four Korean pastors who did their doctoral studies in Potchefstroom during this time.²⁷

According to Chung, there are 137 Korean missionaries working in South Africa from the various denominations.²⁸ There are 62 missionary candidates learning English and undergoing discipleship training in Worcester, Badplaas and other mission centers, and more than 150 Korean seminary students studying in several outstanding theological seminaries such as Stellenbosch, Potchefstroom (now North West) and Pretoria as of 2005.²⁹ According to Chung, South Africa has become a 'base camp' or start-up point for movements into other parts of Africa for Korean missionaries.³⁰

Korea and South Africa established diplomatic relations in December 1992 after the end of the Apartheid regime. Since then, South Africa has become a more popular destination for Korean migrants. Jeon records that there were approximately 250

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷ Jeon, KS. (1996). *Korean in the world: Middle-East and Africa, Korean in the world series 9 (in English)*. Korea: Ministry of Unification.

²⁸ Chung, KC. (2005). Masters thesis. The missionary strategy of Korean churches in South Africa, University of Pretoria.

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ Ibid

Koreans in 1991, 280 in 1992 and 500 in 1995³¹. According to him, the majority of Koreans in South Africa at this time were missionaries and pastors.³² It was only after 1990 that independent immigrants who engaged in small businesses came to South Africa.³³ The Korean population in South Africa gradually increased from the early 1990s onwards as displayed in Table 1, Table 2 and Table 3.

[Table 1] Number of households and immigrants from Korea in South Africa in 1995³⁴

Region	Household	Female spouse	Children	Total
Johannesburg	97	67	130	294
Pretoria	18	11	22	51
Potchefstroom	8	5	12	25
Durban	16	10	15	41
Cape Town	14	9	18	41
Stellenbosch	13	11	22	46
Total	166	113	219	498

³¹ Jeon, KS. (1996). *Korean in the world: Middle-East and Africa, Korean in the world series 9 (in English)*. Korea: Ministry of Unification.

³² Jeon, KS. (1996). *Korean in the world: Middle-East and Africa, Korean in the world series 9 (in English)*. Korea: Ministry of Unification, p. 180

³³ Ibid

³⁴ Ibid

[Table 2] Number of overseas Koreans³⁵ in South Africa from 1997 to 2011³⁶

Year	1997	1999	2001	2003	2005	2007	2009	2011
Koreans	658	1,061	1,356	1,181	3,452	3,480	3,949	4,186

[Table 3] The number of Korean nationals in South Africa and Korean South Africans³⁷

[Unit: person (per cent)]

	Korean nationals in SA			Sub-total of Korean nationals in SA	Korean South Africans (citizens)	Total of overseas Koreans
	Permanent residents	Residents other than student	Students			
Jul 2003	348 (29)	772 (65)	38 (3)	1,181 (100)	23	1,181
Jan 2005	339 (10)	2,429 (70)	641 (19)	3,452 (100)	43	3,452
May 2007	976 (29)	1,702 (51)	647 (19)	3,325 (100)	155	3,480
May 2009	954 (25)	1,768 (46)	1,082 (28)	3,804 *	145	3,949
Dec 2010	1,227 (30)	1,879 (46)	954 (23)	4,060 (100)	126	4,186

* There has been an increasing number of students who study abroad in early age.

In Cape Town, the first Korean immigrant on record arrived in 1986 as a missionary of the Korea Harbor Evangelism Inc.³⁸ He was a missionary who sailed

³⁵ There are approximately 4,060 Korean nationals living in South Africa as of 2011. Overseas Koreans include Koreans with South African citizenship and Korean nationals. The term, overseas Korean, implies the idea of 'diaspora' which Koreans apply to themselves like Jews in the Jewish diaspora. Cohen (1997: ix) provides complex thinking on the idea of 'diasporas' in his book, Cohen, R. (1997). *Global diasporas: An introduction*. UK: UCL press.

³⁶ The statistics of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Korea state that the number is collected by regional Korean associations through the Korean embassies, available at the website, www.korean.net

³⁷ The Mofat notes that the source of the statistics is captured by the regional associations of Koreans. Available at the website, www.mofat.go.kr

³⁸ Dong-A Ilbo. (1995). 'Pastor Jeon in Cape Town'. 30th May.

around the world to preach the gospel to Korean seamen.³⁹ When the famous missionary ship, MV Doulos, anchored off the coast of Cape Town he decided to put down roots there and provide services to Korean seamen and poor local people.⁴⁰ That same year, Hong came to pursue doctoral research in reformed theology at Stellenbosch at the recommendation of his professor in the United States where he did a Masters in theology.⁴¹ According to Jeong, after Hong came to study at Stellenbosch many other Korean theology students have come to study there because of the high standard of reformed theology and moderate living expenses.⁴²

Some Koreans migrated to South Africa with their own motivations and purposes before and after the two countries established diplomatic relations in 1992. However, limited archival sources and scattered information makes it difficult to understand why Korean immigrants came to South Africa during this period. This historical study seeks to deepen our understanding of the experiences of Korean immigrants in South Africa from 1977 to 2011. In the next section I will detail the motivations and key questions of this study.

³⁹ Ibid

⁴⁰ Ibid

⁴¹ Jeong, CK. (1993), Stellenbosch University, *Moksin*, October, Available at the website, <http://www.jundosa.com/>

⁴² Ibid.

1.2. Motivation for the study

In retrospect, at the time when I decided to do my Masters study in Cape Town, there were significant personal factors at play. I felt a strong pull to study abroad, after I had been working for more than ten years. The opportunity became even more attractive once I received a scholarship and was assured I could maintain my position at work.

Since arriving in Cape Town in May 2010, I have experienced immense homesickness and loneliness as a single female foreign student. Consequently, I started attending a Korean church in Cape Town, despite not being a practicing Christian. After meeting friendly Koreans in the church, I felt comfort in relating to these people who were also living as foreigners abroad. It was here, at church, where the inspiration for my project began, as I started to wonder why these people migrated to South Africa from Korea.

My initial suspicion was that Koreans likely migrated to South Africa, especially to Cape Town, in search of English language education for adults and children. However, the volume of emotional, economic, language and cultural difficulties that these people were experiencing in their lives in South Africa raised the question: What then makes them remain in South Africa rather than returning home?

Nevertheless, some scholars and reporters portray overseas Koreans in only a positive light. Overseas Koreans are depicted as diligent people who act like private diplomats, sales people of Korean products and messengers of Korean culture to the people in other countries.⁴³ These romantic and parsimonious images are upheld by the Korean government as well. The president of the Overseas Koreans Foundation congratulated Korean immigrants on their success in their host societies, noting that overseas Korean societies are growing each year and they have successfully assimilated to the mainstream of the host societies.⁴⁴

From other perspectives, migration studies regard massive population movements as accidents of history, the result of unusual circumstances, catastrophes or deviations from the norm.⁴⁵ These views refer to mass migration as a problem, also intimating how migration itself is often perceived as a problem in the host countries, especially in the United States and Western Europe.⁴⁶ Immigrants are perceived to be unassimilated, with customs that are in sharp contrast with those of the local population.⁴⁷ Even though these issues are diluted in the era of globalization, there are

⁴³ Lee, KG. (2000). *Overseas Koreans (in English)*. Korea: Korea National University Press and Jeon, KS. (1996). *Korean in the world: Middle-East and Africa, Korean in the world series 9 (in English)*. Korea: Ministry of Unification.

⁴⁴ Available at the website of the overseas Koreans foundation, <http://www.okf.or.kr>

⁴⁵ Benmayor, R. and Skotnes, S. (eds.). (1994). *Migration and Identity: International yearbook of oral history and life stories volume III*. USA: Oxford University press, p. 4.

⁴⁶ Appleyard, RT. (1991). *International migration: Challenge for the Nineties*, Published for the 40th Anniversary of IOM, Geneva.

⁴⁷ Abbott, E. (1926). *Historical aspects of the immigration problem*. Chicago: The University of Chicago

still relevant debates about ‘denizens’, those who have weak bondage to their new society.⁴⁸ Therefore, based on this alternative perspective, the positive view of overseas Koreans by some scholars, reporters and government organizations is overly-romanticized.

According to Lyubomirsky et al., values guide one’s personal intentional activities and provide the means of altering one’s happiness level.⁴⁹ Considering the characteristics of migration, it is the powerful expression of the immigrants’ will to change their circumstances in the specific historical context; i.e., their personal values, which must have affected their decision to migrate and stay in South Africa. This notion provided the starting point of this study.

press, p. 308

⁴⁸ Cohen, R. (1997). *Global diasporas: An introduction*, UK: UCL press, p. 168

⁴⁹ Bobowik, M., Basabe, N., Paez, D., Jimenez, A. and Bilbao, A. (2011). Personal values and well-being among Europeans, Spanish natives and immigrants to Spain: Does the culture matter?, *Journal of Happiness studies*, 12: 401-419, p. 402

1.3. Questions, arguments and structure of the study

According to Harzig and Hoerder, migration history studies the agency of men and women who negotiate societal options and constraints in pursuit of life-plans.⁵⁰ Migration history explains migration decisions, post migration life-projects and patterns of acculturation of the agency of men and women.⁵¹ Migration studies and migration history overlap to some extent in that they both delve into similar questions. However, while migration studies provide background for strategic policy-making, migration history emphasizes the continuities and changes in patterns of migration over time.⁵²

Many migration studies have been done in receiving societies due to the fact that the host state often sees immigrants as a social problem.⁵³ However, migration history sees the phenomenon as a basic human behavior pattern, as Böhning suggests, “the history of mankind is the history of migration.”⁵⁴

This study explores the migration history of Korean immigrants in South Africa since 1977. This is the year when the first Korean immigrant on record entered South Africa. The reasons why they migrated might be best described by Samuel Schragger’s interview with American immigrant Anna Marie Oslund when her family came to

⁵⁰ Harzig, C. and Hoerder, D. (2009). *What is migration history*. UK: Polity press.

⁵¹ Harzig, C. and Hoerder, D. (2009). *What is migration history*. UK: Polity press, p. 3.

⁵² Ibid

⁵³ Harzig, C. and Hoerder, D. (2009). *What is migration history*. UK: Polity press, p. 54

⁵⁴ Rystad, G. (1992). Immigration history and the future of international migration, *International migration review*, 26 (4): 1168-1199, p. 1172

America “to find a better life for them all.”⁵⁵ The central question for this story is, what does a ‘better life’ mean to Korean immigrants who came to South Africa during the period 1977 to 2011? This study will investigate the properties of ‘the better life’ in the particular social circumstances through Korean and South African history. In other words, what kinds of personal needs and values are Korean immigrants in South Africa seeking to achieve in their lives?

Allardt classifies human needs or values into three types: *having*, *loving* or *relating*, and *being*.⁵⁶ The need for *having* is associated with “those material conditions which are necessary for survival and for avoidance of misery.”⁵⁷ The need for *loving* or *relating* is “the need to relate to other people and to form social identities”, which includes attachment to family and local community, friendships, interactions with associational members.⁵⁸ Finally, the need for *being* is “the need for integration into society and to live in harmony with nature”, which includes taking part in leisure activities, a meaningful work life, and opportunities to enjoy nature, self-empowerment, and political participation.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Yow, V.R. (2005). *Recording oral history: A guide for the Humanities and social sciences*. UK: Alta Mira press, p. 16

⁵⁶ Park, C.M. (2009). The quality of life in South Korea. *Social Indicators Research*, 92: 263-294, p. 275

⁵⁷ Ibid

⁵⁸ Ibid

⁵⁹ Ibid

Inglehart also divides human values into two categories, namely *material* and *post-material* values and studies how each value affects people's levels of subjective well-being⁶⁰. Inglehart argues that when people fulfill some degree of material values, their needs gradually shift from material to post-material, placing greater emphasis on values such as belonging or self-expression.⁶¹

Most migration studies suggest that people's motivation to migrate is directly linked to the material values such as security, wealth and status.⁶² Nevertheless, if you compare the economies of Korea and South Africa, Korea is a much larger economy. More specifically, Korea is the 13th largest economy in the world while South Africa is 26th.⁶³ Clearly, economic security cannot fully explain the reasons why Koreans migrate to South Africa. That said, these economic positions represent 2011 rankings.

If one were to compare the economies of these two countries at the end of the Second World War, in the 1940s, South Africa was among the ten richest countries in the world whereas Korea was one of the poorest.⁶⁴ This relationship continued into 1985, when the gross national income (GNI) per capita of South Africa was USD2,400

⁶⁰ Inglehart, R. (2000). Globalization and Postmodern Values. *The Washington Quarterly*, 23 (1): 215-228.

⁶¹ Ibid

⁶² Bobowik, M., Basabe, N., Paez, D., Jimenez, A. and Bilbao, A. (2011). Personal values and well-being among Europeans, Spanish natives and immigrants to Spain: Does the culture matter?, *Journal of Happiness studies*, 12: 401-419, p. 403.

⁶³ CIA, The world fact book, available at the website, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2001rank.html>

⁶⁴ Peberdy, S. (2009). *Selecting Immigrants: National identity and South Africa's immigration policies 1910-2008*. South Africa: Wits University Press, p. 88

while it was USD2,330 in Korea.⁶⁵ Therefore, for Korean immigrants in South Africa from 1977 to 1985, material improvement, as migration study suggests, was paramount. However, since the 1990s, when the Korean migration to South Africa started in earnest, economic factors cannot fully explain the movement.

To investigate the perceived properties of a 'better life,' the historical background of Korean migration to South Africa must be examined. In addition, it needs to be explained why South Africa was selected as the destination for Korean immigrants more generally. Therefore, comparing the societies of the two countries will be integral to understanding culturally relevant values. This study is reflexive in that there is no such thing as an objective truth about a society. Instead, I seek to depict and interpret the practices of Korean and South African society, particularly within the context of Korean immigrants looking for a better life in South Africa.

It is also necessary to examine the pre-migration motivations, decisions and life-plans of Koreans coming to South Africa. According to Abbott, the causes of modern migration belong in two groups: One is adverse conditions in their home country (e.g. economic distress, political or religious oppression and disparities), the other is the imagined attraction of the new host country.⁶⁶ By investigating the motivations and

⁶⁵ The data is available at the website of World Bank, <http://data.worldbank.org>

⁶⁶ Abbott, E. (1926). *Historical aspects of the immigration problem*. Chicago: The University of Chicago

decision-making of Korean immigrants in South Africa, I can better identify the perceived adverse conditions in Korea, and the supposed attractions in South Africa.

As well as examining pre-migration factors, I will also look closely at immigrants' life-projects after migration. It is important to differentiate here between the terms *life-plans* and *life-projects*. *Life-plans* refer to the pre-migration perspectives whereas *life-projects* refer to post-migration practices. This distinction helps to disaggregate perceptions of migration versus lived realities. In other words, there may be negotiations, changes and constraints on Korean immigrants' life-projects after migration, which affect their stay in South Africa and inform others who may be thinking of immigrating as well.

In sum, I argue that Korean immigrants in Cape Town have pursued personal values through their migration to South Africa, which could not be fulfilled in Korean society. While ordinary Koreans prioritize material values⁶⁷, Korean immigrants in South Africa are more likely to pursue post-material values such as loving, relating and being. Even though they have suffered differences in language, culture and racial discrimination, they have been free to translate their culture and identity in the new

press, p. 3.

⁶⁷ According to Park, C.M. (2009), the AsiaBarometer survey reveal the fact that ordinary Korean citizens still prioritize materialistic values more than post-materialistic values even though life in Korea is highly modernized and digitalized.

society. This has led them to create a 'third space' where they are able to take solace in the contradictory circumstances in their migration lives.

To demonstrate this, the study is designed to analyze the historical background in both Korean and South African societies. The project then details the methodology with which the migration history of Koreans to South Africa is explained. The findings of this study will be expounded in Chapters 6 to 9, through a detailed analysis of key informants.

The next chapter provides a short history of both Korean and South African society, especially in migration intense regions. I specifically consider Seoul and Cape Town because Seoul can represent the society of Korea effectively in terms of its influence on social life of Koreans and Cape Town is a popular South African destination for many Korean immigrants, as shown in the introduction. While these two cities provide the focus for the project, I am not going to restrict the history of this study to the confines of these two cities.

CHAPTER 2. A Tale of Two Cities, Seoul and Cape Town

This section provides some background and context for Korean emigration to South Africa. Specifically, it details push factors like the IMF crisis in Korea, and pull factors that South Africa created to combat the economic isolation of the Apartheid regime.

2.1 Seoul: What pushes people to emigrate?

Seoul is a city of more than ten million people living in the small areas of 605km² which contains approximately one fifth of the total South Korean population.^{68,69} Also, most businesses, government administration, legislative bodies and amenities are concentrated in the Seoul metropolitan area.

Lee categorizes Korean emigration history into four periods.⁷⁰ The first is refugee migration to the north such as Manchuria in China, the maritime province of Siberia in Russia during the period 1860 to 1919.⁷¹ The second is the labor migration to Japan from 1919 to 1945. The third is the elite migration to the United States, Canada, Brazil and West Germany beginning in 1965.⁷² The final period of emigration is

⁶⁸ According to the metropolitan government, population is 10,456,000 and total area is 605.27km² in 2008. www.seoul.go.kr

⁶⁹ Total population is 48,754,657 in 2011, available at www.cia.gov

⁷⁰ Lee, KG. (2000). *Overseas Koreans (in English)*. Korea: Korea National University Press.

⁷¹ Lee, KG. (2000). *Overseas Koreans (in English)*. Korea: Korea National University Press, p. 12.

⁷² Ibid

business migration to South East Asia, Australia, New Zealand, the Middle-East and Africa after the end of the Vietnam War in 1975.⁷³

Lee claims that the Vietnam War marked a new era in the history of Korean migration. This was because soldiers and small to medium sized businesses who had been in Vietnam moved to the South after the war.⁷⁴ According to Kim, some 49,000 Korean troops engaged in combat and an additional 15,000 civilian laborers and technicians were working in Vietnam as employees of American and Korean firms by the end of 1969.⁷⁵ Kim argues that frugal civilian employees during a two-year tour in Vietnam saved enough capital to start small businesses or workshops of their own.⁷⁶ Therefore, some Koreans, who had been in Vietnam during the war, could be dispersed to other countries with some capital, especially to the South as Lee argued.

Lee identifies a key difference between the third and fourth periods of emigration as well; while migrants in the third period went through due formalities before migration such as getting a visa before departure, migrants in the fourth period were expatriates of Korean companies or tourists when they departed Korea.⁷⁷ This means that migrants in the fourth period - including migration to South Africa -

⁷³ Ibid

⁷⁴ Ibid

⁷⁵ Kim, S. (1970). Korea's involvement in Vietnam and its economic and political effect. *Asian survey*, 10(6): 519-532, p. 519.

⁷⁶ Kim, S. (1970). Korea's involvement in Vietnam and its economic and political effect. *Asian survey*, 10(6): 519-532, p. 522

⁷⁷ Lee, KG. (2000). *Overseas Koreans (in English)*. Korea: Korea National University Press.

departed home without intending to take up permanent residence abroad.

2.1.1. Globalization and the IMF crisis

One of the major push factors for Koreans migrating to South Africa was the International Monetary Fund (IMF) crisis of the late 1990s. The crisis was characterized as “the greatest crisis since the Korean War” by the former president Kim Dae Jung (1998-2003).⁷⁸ The term ‘IMF crisis’ was coined by Koreans during the economic crisis of 1997-1998, when a series of major corporate bankruptcies (Kia automobiles, Hanbo steel) and currency crises in Southeast Asia (Thailand and Indonesia) led to a full-scale financial crisis in Korea.⁷⁹ In response, the Korean government struck a historic agreement with the IMF on December 1997, for a USD55 billion rescue package.⁸⁰ The agreement stipulated far-reaching reforms in the financial sector, accelerated liberalization of trade and investment and radical corporate restructuring measures.⁸¹

The impact of the crisis on the Korean people was severe; Korean currency – the won - depreciated dramatically, housing values plummeted, many lost their jobs and

⁷⁸ Kim, S. (Ed.) (2000). *Korea's Globalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University press, p. xv

⁷⁹ Gills, B. and Gills, D. (2000). Globalization and strategic choice in South Korea: Economic reform and labor. In S. Kim (Ed.), *Korea's globalization*, Cambridge: Cambridge Univ press, p. 43

⁸⁰ Ibid

⁸¹ Ibid

the number of homeless increased.⁸² The unemployment rate in Korea soared to a record high of 7.6% in 1998, with the number of jobless climbing to 1.75 million.⁸³ Moreover, the average monthly bankruptcy rate of firms reached more than 3,000 in the first quarter of 1998.⁸⁴ The sudden job losses caused immense social distress because adequate social safety nets were not developed in a timely fashion.⁸⁵

Despite the significant economic hardship, the term 'IMF crisis' is a misnomer since the IMF was not directly involved.⁸⁶ In fact, the crisis occurred due to the inefficient management and imprudent lending by financial institutions, along with over-investment and low profitability in the corporate sector.⁸⁷ This was based on the historic government-conglomerate (*chaebol* in Korean) alliance, or more specifically, the government-*chaebol*-banking triad. The government-*chaebol*-banking triad was sustained by a 'growth first' orientation whereby the Korean government regarded the financial institutions as the ideal instruments for carrying out its industrial policy since the Park Jung Hee military regime (1963-1979).⁸⁸ State allocations of credit enabled

⁸² Ha, S.K. and Lee, S.W. (2001). IMF and the Crisis of the marginalized urban sector in Korea. *Journal of contemporary Asia*, 31 (2): 196-214, p. 200

⁸³ Ibid

⁸⁴ Hong, K.S. and Lee, J.W. (2000). Korea: Returning to sustainable growth? In W.T. Woo, J.D. Sachs and K. Schwab (Eds.), *The Asian financial crises: Lessons for a resilient Asia*, London: The MIT press, p. 211

⁸⁵ Ibid

⁸⁶ In fact, the IMF has been blamed by many scholars by the fact that its restructuring programme was inappropriate in the condition of Korea. However much they mislead the programme, the root cause of the IMF crisis cannot be referred to the IMF.

⁸⁷ Hong, K.S. and Lee, J.W. (2000). Korea: Returning to sustainable growth? In W.T. Woo, J.D. Sachs and K. Schwab (Eds.), *The Asian financial crises: Lessons for a resilient Asia*, London: The MIT press, p. 203

⁸⁸ Hong, K.S. and Lee, J.W. (2000). Korea: Returning to sustainable growth? In W.T. Woo, J.D. Sachs and

chaebol (conglomerate) expansion through financing to the core businesses while organized labor was strictly controlled and prohibited by law from direct political activity or the funding of political parties during the 1960s to 1980s.⁸⁹

It is widely believed that the root cause of the IMF crisis was the failure of previous administrations, especially those of Roh Tae Woo (1988-1993) and Kim Young Sam (1993-1998), to dismantle the old government-business alliance after three decades of military regimes.⁹⁰ However, *chaebols* (conglomerates) were considered assets for the disciplining of industrial investment and pursuit of international export advantage by the mid-1990s⁹¹ so the government's reform on its old practice had been very cautious and it was resisted by the *chaebols* (conglomerates). The other option for the government was globalization.

K. Schwab (Eds.), *The Asian financial crises: Lessons for a resilient Asia*, London: The MIT press, p. 207

⁸⁹ Gills, B. and Gills, D. (2000). Globalization and strategic choice in South Korea: Economic reform and labor. In S. Kim (Ed.), *Korea's globalization*, Cambridge: Cambridge Univ press, p. 29

⁹⁰ Gills, B. and Gills, D. (2000). Globalization and strategic choice in South Korea: Economic reform and labor. In S. Kim (Ed.), *Korea's globalization*, Cambridge: Cambridge Univ press, p. 45

⁹¹ Gills, B. and Gills, D. (2000). Globalization and strategic choice in South Korea: Economic reform and labor. In S. Kim (Ed.), *Korea's globalization*, Cambridge: Cambridge Univ press, p. 30

Globalization is the shortcut which will lead us to building a first-class country in the 21st century. This is why I revealed my plan for globalization and the government has concentrated all of its energy in forging ahead with it. It is aimed at realizing globalization in all sectors – politics, foreign affairs, economy, society, education, culture and sports. To this end, it is necessary to enhance our viewpoints, way of thinking, system and practices to the world class level.....We have no choice other than this.

President Kim Young Sam, 6 January 1995⁹²

The former president of Korea, Kim Young Sam, believed that globalization (*Segyehwa* in Korean) would enhance all Korean's standards of living to the level of those of the advanced countries such as the United States and the wealthy European countries. The drive was partly due to Korean aspirations of joining the OECD⁹³ (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) which was considered the first step to become a first class nation in the 21st century. The Presidential Globalization Commission was formed in 1995 and emphasized rapid liberalization of capital, technology, goods and service flows across nations, and ushered in a period of 'boundless global competition'. Korea joined the OECD in 1996 and suffered the IMF crisis the very next year.

⁹² Kim, S. (2000). Korea and Globalization (*Segyehwa*): A framework for analysis. In S. Kim (Ed.), *Korea's globalization*, Cambridge: Cambridge University press, p. 1

⁹³ Gills, B. and Gills, D. (2000). Globalization and strategic choice in South Korea: Economic reform and labor. In S. Kim (Ed.), *Korea's globalization*, Cambridge: Cambridge Univ press, p. 36

2.1.2. Legacies of the IMF crisis and globalization

The Korean government claimed “globalization entails rationalizing all aspects of life”, which requires “reforms in every area,” and “a sweeping transformation of society” through “productivity and flexibility” in all areas of national life.⁹⁴ This understanding has not confined globalization to the economic realm, but also included implications for people’s everyday life. Enhancing labor market flexibility was a key goal in Korea’s structural reform. However, Koreans had been accustomed to lifetime employment even in the private sector.⁹⁵ Therefore, massive layoffs as well as early and involuntary retirement during and after the IMF crisis affected Koreans economically and psychologically. In fact, one study suggests that the emotional shock of unemployment for Korean families was 1.5 times as severe as that of their European or American counterparts.⁹⁶

A newspaper reported in 1998 that many Koreans considered emigration as their last option to avoid the economic difficulties caused by the IMF crisis.⁹⁷

According to the statistics of emigrants released by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Mofat), the number of emigrants declined since the early 1990s until the early

⁹⁴ Gills, B. and Gills, D. (2000). Globalization and strategic choice in South Korea: Economic reform and labor. In S. Kim (Ed.), *Korea’s globalization*, Cambridge: Cambridge Univ press, p. 38

⁹⁵ Hong, KS. and Lee, JW. (2000). Korea: Returning to sustainable growth? In W.T. Woo, J.D. Sachs, and K. Schwab (Eds.), *The Asian financial crises: Lessons for a resilient Asia*, London: The MIT press, p. 218.

⁹⁶ Ha, S.K. and Lee, S.W. (2001). IMF and the Crisis of the marginalized urban sector in Korea. *Journal of contemporary Asia*, 31 (2): 196-214, p. 201

⁹⁷ Kyunghyang news. (1998). ‘IMF emigration, going anywhere to escape from difficulties’. 21st May.

2000s. Mofat explains that the relative economic prosperity of the 1990s before the IMF crisis led to decreasing emigration, however, the number of emigrants increased sharply afterwards.⁹⁸ The newspaper continued to report that South Africa was a growing destination for Koreans looking to emigrate and quoted a 53-year-old migrant-in-waiting who ran a small clothing company and said that he decided to emigrate because his business was facing bankruptcy due to the rapid decrease of sales after the recession caused by the IMF crisis.⁹⁹ He planned to go to Canada initially, but changed his mind because conditions in South Africa were more attractive.¹⁰⁰

In addition to the economic predicaments, globalization affected Korean migration in terms of education. Many studies report that an increasing number of young children migrating to study in English-speaking countries since the early 2000s, especially the United States and Australia.¹⁰¹ This phenomenon is also reflected in South Africa. Coetzee-Van Rooy interviewed three Korean adults in Potchefstroom and concluded that recent Korean families migrated to English-speaking countries, not only

⁹⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Korea. (2006). Status of emigration and return migration. 19th June

⁹⁹ Kyunghyang news. (1998). 'IMF emigration, going anywhere to escape from difficulties'. 21st May.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid

¹⁰¹ Song, J. (2010). Language ideology and identity in transnational space: globalization, migration, and bilingualism among Korean families in the USA. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 13 (1): 23-42, Kang, YJ. (2009). Transnational life of Korean 'Wild geese family': Coping strategies and family paths across time. *Korean Journal of Community Living Science*, 20(2): 205-221, An, S.H. (2009). Learning US history in an age of globalization and transnational migration. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 41(6): 763-787 and Lee, YJ. and Koo, H. (2006). Wild geese fathers' and a globalized family strategy for education in Korea, *IDPR*, 28 (4): 533-553.

to Britain or the United States, but also to countries of the wide Anglo world such as South Africa.¹⁰²

It is not a new practice for Koreans to study in English-speaking countries. Scholars and employers refer to some degree of Korean-English ‘bilingualism’¹⁰³ when they employ lecturers and employees in Korea. Therefore, many students have obtained higher education qualifications outside Korea. This is much more common among post-graduate students.¹⁰⁴ However, since the turn of the new millennium, much younger students from pre-school onwards started going abroad for study.¹⁰⁵ Some identify globalization and the growing power of English as a critical asset to achieve occupational mobility, and as a major push factor for young students to study abroad.¹⁰⁶ Others see it as evidence of dissatisfaction with the exam-oriented Korean education system.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰² Coetzee-Van Rooy, A.S. (2008). From the Expanding to the Outer Circle: South Koreans learning English in South Africa. *English today* 96, 24(4): 3-10, p. 3.

¹⁰³ Coetzee-Van Rooy, A.S. (2008). From the Expanding to the Outer Circle: South Koreans learning English in South Africa. *English today* 96, 24(4): 3-10, p. 4

¹⁰⁴ Ibid

¹⁰⁵ Song, J. (2010). Language ideology and identity in transnational space: globalization, migration, and bilingualism among Korean families in the USA. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 13 (1): 23-42.

¹⁰⁶ Lee, YJ. and Koo, H. (2006). ‘Wild geese fathers’ and a globalized family strategy for education in Korea, *IDPR*, 28 (4): 533-553.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid

The term ‘wild geese fathers’ has been assigned to fathers who remain home in Korea to work and support their families, while the mothers take the children to study abroad. Arrangements like these have been in the spotlight in Korea since the early 2000s. The phenomenon attracted attention because, in an extreme case, one man committed suicide because of the frustration he felt at being undervalued as a father, and seen by his family only as a means of financial support.¹⁰⁸

There are many studies about such families, sometimes referred to as ‘transnational families’ and ‘global householding’.¹⁰⁹ This is quite similar to Korean migrants to the Middle East during the construction boom in the 1970s and 1980s. During this period, there was also the tendency to split family members to improve their economic status. However, now the roles are reversed; instead of the breadwinner travelling abroad for economic opportunity, he remains home while his family goes abroad.

The era of ‘boundless competition’ has affected Koreans of all ages since the IMF crisis. Adults need to survive in the narrower path of employment and businesses, while their children are pressured to succeed in school in order to become prosperous

¹⁰⁸ Kim, KL. and Choi, KH. (2009), *Encyclopedia of popular culture (in English)*. Korea: Hyunsil Munhwa.

¹⁰⁹ Lee, YJ. and Koo, H. (2006). ‘Wild geese fathers’ and a globalized family strategy for education in Korea, *IDPR*, 28 (4): 533-553, p. 533.

adults. Sound competition might be a source of progress in some cases, but excessive struggle distorts the relationship between people and society.

School violence and bullying has become so common between students and teachers that it has ceased to be make headlines since the late 1990s.¹¹⁰ However, violence has escalated with sexual assaults between students being reported recently.¹¹¹ The combination of family stress, competitive anxiety and school-based violence is beginning to take a large toll on Korean quality of life. One statistic indicated that in 2010, 15,566 people committed suicide in Korea, and that suicide was one of the main causes of death followed by cancer.¹¹²

In these social circumstances, Mofat acknowledged a trend of emigration which has been increasing recently in order to ensure the well-being of families and a better education for their children in 2006.¹¹³ Behind the economic success and the following economic crisis, the relationship between people has been distorted and derailed from a sound social norm. Therefore, people look for a way to avoid these social pressures which hinder their well-being. One of the ways is emigration.

¹¹⁰ The Hankyoreh. (2006). 'School violence on rise in Korea', 14th November.

¹¹¹ Korean government, dealing with the school violence and bullying, has implemented policies that it made the comprehensive countermeasure against school violence in 1995 and enforced the law, the act on prevention and extermination of school violence in 2004.

¹¹² Korea herald. (2011). 'Suicide main cause of death in Korea', 8th September.

¹¹³ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. (2006). Status of emigration and return migration. 19th June.

As examined above, Koreans have experienced government control on labor unions, the economic predicaments after the IMF crisis, boundless competition for all age groups, school violence and distorted social relationships. All of these contextual circumstances are significant push factors for Koreans to emigrate.

Although the circumstances have been getting worse in Korea, South Africa is not a perfect alternative. The country is notorious for its racial discrimination and segregation and its crime rate. By way of comparison, where 15,566 people committed suicide in Korea, 15,940 people were murdered in South Africa in 2010.¹¹⁴ Therefore, it might not seem like the best destination for Korean migrants, especially since Asians had been called ‘Yellow peril’ in Western countries since the late nineteenth century.¹¹⁵

For this reason, the following section examines the history and social circumstances of South Africa in the period 1977-2011, to gain a better understanding of the pull factors which operate in conjunction with the above-mentioned push factors.

¹¹⁴ Timse, T. (2011). ‘South Africa murder rate lowest since apartheid: police’, AFP, 8th Sep

¹¹⁵ Thompson, R.A. (1978). *The yellow peril, 1890-1924*, New York: Amo press.

2.2. Cape Town: Selected immigrants are welcomed

Cape Town is one of the most famous tourist destinations in the world where an area of 2,461km² is home to more than 3.4 million people.¹¹⁶ The city is the provincial capital of the Western Cape and the legislative capital of South Africa. Due to the mild climate and the natural settings of the Cape floral kingdom, almost 2 million international tourists visited the city in 2007.¹¹⁷

Cape Town was South Africa's dominant metropole until the mid-nineteenth century, but by the latter stages of the century it was increasingly surpassed by economic growth points beyond that of the Cape colony.¹¹⁸ 20th century South African history was subsequently dominated by the Witwatersrand region and the relative decline of Cape Town.¹¹⁹ Perhaps this is why 2,000 Korean immigrants live in Gauteng while 1,500 reside in the Western Cape. Cape Town does boast some diversity. According to the 2001 census, 1.2% of the city's population is foreign and 3% is foreign born.

¹¹⁶ The population and the total areas are in 2007. Available at www.capetown.gov.za

¹¹⁷ 1,763,631 international tourists visited in Western Cape, available at the website, www.capetown.gov.za

¹¹⁸ Field, S. (1998). From the 'peaceful past' to the 'violent present': Memory, myth and identity in Guguletu. In A. Norval and D. Howarth (Eds.) *South Africa in Transition*, London: Macmillan press.

¹¹⁹ Field, S. (1996). Doctoral thesis, The power of exclusion: Moving memories from windermere to the Cape flats, 1920s-1990s, UK: University of Essex, p. 31

The history of white migration begins when the first white settlers arrived at the Cape in 1652 with the Dutch East India Company.¹²⁰ Since that time, white immigration has been mostly welcomed whereas there have been explicit discrimination against Jews, especially from the Eastern Europe.¹²¹ Smuts, when he was the Minister of the Interior in 1913 remained steadfast that those who were in a country had the right to select those entering that country.¹²² In accordance with this belief, the South African government implemented exclusive immigration policies since 1913.

Whereas the United Party government (1934-1948) encouraged white, particularly British, immigration, the National Party government (1948-1994), with its narrow Afrikaner nationalist vision, implemented exclusionary immigration policies. The nationalist regime particularly preferred immigrants from Germany and Netherlands through reference to the 'absorptive capacity' among whites.¹²³

Consequently, Asians, especially Indians, were excluded from immigration. The 1913 Immigrants Regulations Act (Act 22) was among the founding legislation of the new state and remained a cornerstone of South Africa's immigration legislation into the

¹²⁰ Peberdy, S. (2009). *Selecting Immigrants: National identity and South Africa's immigration policies 1910-2008*. Johannesburg: Wits University press, p. 59

¹²¹ Ibid

¹²² Peberdy, S. (2009). *Selecting Immigrants: National identity and South Africa's immigration policies 1910-2008*. Johannesburg: Wits University press, p. 1

¹²³ Peberdy, S. (2009). *Selecting Immigrants: National identity and South Africa's immigration policies 1910-2008*. Johannesburg: Wits University press, p. 7

2000s.¹²⁴ One of the main issues of the act was the prevention of more Indian immigrants from entering South Africa as labor.¹²⁵ The act also affected Chinese labor immigrants as well.

The assumed first immigrants to South Africa from neighboring countries to Korea, namely China and Japan, have had their stories recorded by Chinese South African and Japanese scholars. In 1858, a few Chinese from Java were brought to a sugar company in Natal, and from 1875, the Natal colonial government imported Chinese artisans and laborers on a small scale for the colony's road-making, harbor and other public works projects.¹²⁶ Independent Chinese immigrants arrived in South Africa from the 1870s onwards.¹²⁷ It is not known whether these Chinese artisans, laborers and their descendants remained in South Africa. However, they faced severe prejudice from white settlers who accused them of being barbarians and uncivilized men, making it very difficult to adapt to South African society.¹²⁸

In 1898, the first Japanese businessman to settle in South Africa arrived in Cape Town with his wife six months after they left Yokohama, Japan although he had met

¹²⁴ Peberdy, S. (2009). *Selecting Immigrants: National identity and South Africa's immigration policies 1910-2008*. Johannesburg: Wits University press, p. 33

¹²⁵ Ibid

¹²⁶ Yap, M. and Man, DL. (1996). *Colour, confusion, concession: The history of the Chinese in South Africa*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University press, p. 20

¹²⁷ Park, YJ, Tu, H. and Chen, A.Y. (2010). Faces of China. New Chinese migrants in South Africa, *African and Asian studies*, 9: 286-306.

¹²⁸ Park, YJ, Tu, H. and Chen, A.Y. (2010). Faces of China. New Chinese migrants in South Africa, *African and Asian studies*, 9: 286-306, p. 21

three more Japanese who previously resided in Cape Town.¹²⁹ He returned to Japan in 1915. However, the store he ran lasted until 1942, when the South African government deported Japanese residents in the Union and confiscated properties owned by them.¹³⁰

How could these people settle in South Africa since they had been unwelcome since 1913? The answer to this question might be the financial investment of immigrants from China, Japan and Korea. If they could not afford to invest money in South Africa, they would not be permitted to enter the country. Abbott also recognizes the capital value of European immigration to the United States saying that money is not the only property which immigrants bring with them.¹³¹ In addition, they have other properties such as their household goods - and more importantly - human resources such as their education, occupation and youth when determining their value.¹³²

In addition, Asian immigrants to South Africa might have found certain attractions in South African society that fuelled the continued migration into South Africa. According to Peberdy, the attractions of South Africa to the people of Europe were land, government support for immigration, mild weather and political and

¹²⁹ Osada, M. (2002). *Sanctions and honorary white: Diplomatic policies and economic realities in relations*, USA: Greenwood press, p. 30

¹³⁰ Ibid

¹³¹ Abbott, E. (1926). *Historical aspects of the immigration problem*. Chicago: The University of Chicago press, p. 370

¹³² Abbott, E. (1926). *Historical aspects of the immigration problem*. Chicago: The University of Chicago press, p. 372

religious liberty.¹³³ What, then, have been the attractions of South African society to immigrants from Asia since the late nineteenth century? To answer this question, I will examine the experiences of Chinese, Japanese and Korean immigrants in South Africa historically in the next section. Since people from these three countries are similar in appearance, their migrant experiences in South Africa may be analytically comparable.

2.2.1. Chinese immigrants from different Chinas

Park argues that there has been a considerable growth in the Chinese population in South Africa in the past two decades.¹³⁴ There are approximately 250,000 to 350,000 Chinese from 'three distinct Chinas,' ranging from wealthy Taiwanese industrialists to educated middle-managers from Beijing and Shanghai, poor migrants from rural Fujian province, and a mostly professional class of second, third, and fourth generation Chinese South Africans.¹³⁵

Unlike earlier immigrants from the late nineteenth century who encountered fear and hatred based on race, during the 1970s small numbers of Taiwanese industrialists were enticed to make investments in remote areas of South Africa as a result of the

¹³³ Peberdy, S. (2009). *Selecting Immigrants: National identity and South Africa's immigration policies 1910-2008*. Johannesburg: Wits University press.

¹³⁴ Park, YJ. (2009). 'Recent Chinese Migrations to South Africa: New Intersections of Race, Class & Ethnicity' in Representation, Expression and Identity. In Tina Rahimy (Ed.), *Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. Inter-Disciplinary Press, pp 153-168. Retrieved from <http://www.inter-disciplinary.net/publishing/id-press/ebooks/representation-expression-and-identity/>

¹³⁵ Ibid

increasing close ties between the Apartheid government and the Republic of China/Taiwan.¹³⁶

Thanks to South Africa's generous incentives, including relocation costs, subsidized wages for seven years, subsidized rent for ten years, cheap transport of goods to urban areas and housing loans and favorable exchange rates, the immigration of investors and their families from Taiwan and Hong Kong was encouraged.¹³⁷ Even though the incentives for immigrants were originally intended to encourage European immigration, the assisted immigration scheme was eventually extended to the Taiwanese. This only occurred after deepening isolation of the Apartheid government in the international community, and continued from the early 1960s until December 1991.¹³⁸

In addition to the attractive immigration packages offered to Taiwanese and Chinese immigrants, Japanese exemption from the Group Areas and Liquor Acts and an 'honorary white' status also increased the incentive for Asians to migrate to South Africa.¹³⁹ Therefore, although the law laid down prohibitions, permits allowed exemptions. In the 1960s and 1970s such permits enabled the Chinese to live in white

¹³⁶ Ibid

¹³⁷ Ibid

¹³⁸ Peberdy, S. (2009). *Selecting Immigrants: National identity and South Africa's immigration policies 1910-2008*. Johannesburg: Wits University press.

¹³⁹ Yap, M. and Man, DL. (1996). *Colour, confusion, concession: The history of the Chinese in South Africa*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University press.

areas, trade and buy property, travel, attend universities and technical colleges and enroll at white private schools.¹⁴⁰

However, Yap and Man illustrate that Taiwanese encountered difficulties in renting accommodation and in purchasing property until the ordinance prohibiting Asiatic settlement was eventually repealed in 1986.¹⁴¹ In addition, there were many negative media reports about Chinese and Koreans threatening local economies in the early 1990s¹⁴² so that local South Africans might have had negative perceptions about Asians at that time.

Park points out other kinds of difficulties new Chinese immigrants faced such as language barriers and crime.

[O]ne of the key issues for newer immigrants is their lack of English language skills. Language barrier created communication difficulties, strained labor relations, and exacerbated their isolation..... Associated with the lack of language skills, newer immigrants also reported social isolation, boredom and loneliness. Lack of English skills also jeopardizes their healthcare.....The biggest challenge regarding life in South Africa, however, is crime. Anecdotal evidence suggests that most Chinese immigrants have fallen victim at least once or twice to break-ins and armed robberies. In Johannesburg there are repeated incidents of car hijacking, kidnapping, and armed break-ins. It appears that there are several crime 'syndicates' specifically targeting Chinese.¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ Ibid

¹⁴¹ Ibid

¹⁴² Ibid

¹⁴³ Park, YJ. (2009). 'Recent Chinese Migrations to South Africa: New Intersections of Race, Class & Ethnicity' in Representation, Expression and Identity. In Tina Rahimy (Ed.), *Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. Inter-Disciplinary Press, pp 153-168. Retrieved from <http://www.inter-disciplinary.net/publishing/id-press/ebooks/representation-expression-and-identity/>, p. 160.

It appears that life in South Africa, especially in Johannesburg, has not been comfortable for many new Chinese immigrants since the 1970s. Nevertheless, there are approximately 300,000 Chinese people in South Africa currently, so there must be some attractive elements of their life projects in South Africa.¹⁴⁴ Now let us move on to the experiences of Japanese immigrants in South Africa.

2.2.2. Japanese immigrants as ‘honorary whites’

According to Osada, immediately after the enactment of the immigration act of 1913 which prevented Asiatics from entering South Africa, Japan started to put pressure on both the British and South African governments to improve the treatment of Japanese people.¹⁴⁵ Japanese official archives between 1914 and 1930 show that the Japanese government spent a tremendous amount of time and energy trying to convince the South African government to give Japanese special treatment.¹⁴⁶ As a result, the so-called ‘gentleman’s agreement’ in 1930, between the two countries allowed Japanese students,

¹⁴⁴ According to Park, JY. (2009), the Chinese embassy reports that while they do not have any official figures, they estimate that there are about 200,000 Chinese in South Africa. In news broadcasting by CCTV and other news agencies, the figure rises to 300,000; she estimates that there are between 300,000 to 350,000.

¹⁴⁵ Osada, M. (2002). *Sanctions and honorary white: Diplomatic policies and economic realities in relations*, USA: Greenwood press.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid

tourists and wholesale buyers to enter South Africa and reside in white areas.¹⁴⁷

Furthermore, Japanese could get 'honorary white' status in relation to the Group Areas Act in 1960.¹⁴⁸

While Japan condemned South Africa's racial policies and imposed diplomatic, economic and cultural sanctions against South Africa, trade between Japan and South Africa increased rapidly even after the Sharpeville massacre in 1960,¹⁴⁹ increasing 500% in the 1960s and more than 3,000% between 1960 and 1985.¹⁵⁰ In 1986 and 1987, Japan became the South Africa's largest trading partner.¹⁵¹

The economic ties between the two countries affected the treatment of Japanese immigrants including expatriates of Japanese companies who were treated as 'honorary whites' during the Apartheid regime. As a result, Japanese immigrants in South Africa could enjoy the high standard of living and beautiful natural environment.

Yamamoto's Masters thesis describes the lives of Japanese expatriates in South Africa who work for transnational corporations such as Mitsubishi, Toyota and Sony.¹⁵² She interviewed fourteen Japanese immigrants who resided in South Africa from 1970

¹⁴⁷ Ibid

¹⁴⁸ Ibid

¹⁴⁹ Ibid

¹⁵⁰ Osada, M. (2002). *Sanctions and honorary white: Diplomatic policies and economic realities in relations*, USA: Greenwood press, p. 4

¹⁵¹ Ibid

¹⁵² Yamamoto, M. (2007). Masters thesis, Honorary or Honorable?: A study of Japanese residents in South Africa during the apartheid era with special reference to their experiences and understanding of their status in the white-dominant society, South Africa: University of Cape Town.

to 2007 and illustrated their experiences in South Africa as following:

[I]n general, the houses where they stayed in were the same standard as those of middle class white South Africans which comprised several bedrooms and a swimming pool or a tennis court, and they employed female domestic workers and male gardeners at home in a similar manner to those people.....The narratives of the informants, as well as the newsletter called Springbok published by the Nippon Club, showed how they enjoyed their leisure time; playing golf, tennis, card games and mahjong.¹⁵³

Yamamoto argues that Japanese immigrants during Apartheid could enjoy a wealthy lifestyle with spacious houses and domestic workers. In addition, social infrastructure such as banking, service sectors and cultural spaces were already established so Japanese immigrants did not feel any inconvenience.¹⁵⁴ Japanese immigrants saw South Africa as an 'extension of Europe' as the Japan External Trade Organization described in its white paper in 1962.¹⁵⁵

According to the embassy of Japan in South Africa, there are 1,285 Japanese nationals residing in South Africa as of October 2010. The number has not changed much from that in the late 1970s, which were approximately 700.¹⁵⁶ It can be assumed that these are still mostly expatriates of Japanese transnational corporations residing in

¹⁵³ Yamamoto, M. (2007). Masters thesis, Honorary or Honorable?: A study of Japanese residents in South Africa during the apartheid era with special reference to their experiences and understanding of their status in the white-dominant society, South Africa: University of Cape Town, p. 60

¹⁵⁴ Yamamoto, M. (2007). Masters thesis, Honorary or Honorable?: A study of Japanese residents in South Africa during the apartheid era with special reference to their experiences and understanding of their status in the white-dominant society, South Africa: University of Cape Town.

¹⁵⁵ Osada, M. (2002). *Sanctions and honorary white: Diplomatic policies and economic realities in relations*, USA: Greenwood press, p. 56

¹⁵⁶ Jeon, KS. (1996). *Korean in the world: Middle-east and Africa, Korean in the world series 9 (in English)*. Korea: Ministry of Unification, p. 187

South Africa. Although the life experiences in South Africa, specifically in Johannesburg, have been comfortable, with spacious housing, domestic workers, high quality products and infrastructure, Japanese people did not make their home in South Africa.

2.2.3. Korean immigrants from 1977

Early Korean immigrants were conscious of the 'honorary white' status that Japanese people were awarded in South African Apartheid society, noting that "thanks to the Japanese' precedent, we could avoid explicit discrimination."¹⁵⁷ As mentioned earlier, most of the Korean early immigrants in South Africa were expatriates of Korean companies, employees of small to medium sized companies, students or religious people. Due to the high rate of unemployment of local South Africans only investment immigrants could enter the country.¹⁵⁸

According to Jeon, the Korean government was required to settle the problem of 288 illegal Korean immigrants in South Africa during the regime changing period of

¹⁵⁷ Dong A Ilbo, (1995). 'Acting like a diplomat build up the foundation for migration to South Africa', 18th May

¹⁵⁸ Jeon, KS. (1996). *Korean in the world: Middle-east and Africa, Korean in the world series 9 (in English)*. Korea: Ministry of Unification, p.199

1994 by the South African embassy in Korea.¹⁵⁹ The number was quite large considering the number of Korean immigrants in 1995 was 498. It could be assumed that there were Korean immigrants who did not fit the criteria of investment immigration which required a minimum USD300,000 in 1994.¹⁶⁰ That said, this provides useful insight into why Korean immigrants wanted to live in South Africa, even as illegal immigrants.

The life experiences of early Korean immigrants in South Africa were similar to those of the Japanese, to the extent that they could enjoy better living conditions along with beautiful nature. Korean experiences were also similar to those of Chinese immigrants in that they benefited from the incentives for investment in South Africa. In addition to these factors, there were other pull factors that Koreans felt when considering migrating to South Africa; they found out that South African society was very good for raising and schooling their children.

[T]he society of South Africa is very conservative, not like other Western countries, that it has desirable environment for raising children. Also there was a warm atmosphere towards foreigners in South Africa where the international isolation had been deepened.¹⁶¹

- *Mr. Yoo*

¹⁵⁹ Ibid

¹⁶⁰ Ibid

¹⁶¹ Dong A Ilbo, (1995). 'Acting like a diplomat build up the foundation for migration to South Africa', 18th May.

The desirable educational environment and relatively minor discrimination might also have influenced subsequent Korean immigration. Due to their positive memories, people could migrate to South Africa with relative impunity from the discrimination that Koreans have faced elsewhere in the Western world.

In this section, I examined the historical social circumstances in South Africa for Asian immigrants, including Chinese and Japanese immigrants who have similar experiences to Korean immigrants. Most of these pull factors were a result of the South African government attracting foreign investment during the economic isolation of Apartheid.

However, the literature about Korean immigrants in South Africa is anecdotal and is considerably under-researched. This makes it hard to discover the motivations for migration in terms of immigrants' life-projects and experiences in South African society. Therefore, this study conducts empirical research to address this knowledge gap. The following section will introduce the methodology employed in this project.

CHAPTER 3. Methodology: Introduction

This research project collected primary data through oral history interviews and surveys. The oral history interview is an effective means to record historical accounts of ordinary people, especially those who do not have many written records. Korean immigrants in South Africa have not been hegemonic in either Korea or South Africa. As a result, their stories have rarely been recorded. As Portelli argues, oral sources are a necessary condition for a history of the non-hegemonic classes; they are less necessary for the history of the ruling classes, who have had control over writing and leave behind a much more abundant written record.¹⁶²

Despite its benefits, the oral history interview is a time consuming process and it is hard to collect sufficient testimony to convince readers. The best way to collect oral history might be interviewing larger populations because listening to more people will increase understanding of the phenomenon. However, given the time constraint of a Masters Thesis and limited resources, I have had to accept this limitation. To offset my limited sample, I also conducted a survey of a much larger population of Korean immigrants.

¹⁶² Portelli, A. (1991). *The death of Luigi Trastulli and other stories, Form and meaning in oral history*. New York: State university of New York press.

Statistical data are limited to the number of immigrants and type of residence permit of immigrants as Table 3 indicates, making it impossible to infer their reasons, life-plans and experiences in South Africa. However, the survey gives some idea of the aggregate household composition, age, gender, length of stay, motivations and satisfaction of Korean immigrants in Cape Town.

The survey compared to the oral history interviews also reveals issues hidden in the face-to-face interview in order to make a positive impression on the researcher.¹⁶³ It is easier to be honest in an anonymous self-administered survey questionnaire than in a recorded face-to-face interview with a stranger.

Indeed, the comparison and integration of two methodologies is one used by many researchers (Brannen 1992, Bryman 1988, Creswell 2003, Tashakkori and Teddlie 2003) who point out the advantages of mixed methods in the social sciences.¹⁶⁴ This is a historical and not a social science study, but social survey data can be a source of historical study and many historians use statistical data in their studies.

In fact, Kelle argues that mixed methods are a good means of drawing conclusions from findings from different methods, which enhances the validity and the

¹⁶³ Neuman, W.L. (2006). *Social research methods*, USA: Pearson education inc, p. 283

¹⁶⁴ Alasuutari, P., Bickman, L. and Brannen, J. (Eds). (2009). *The SAGE handbook of social research methods*, London: SAGE publications, p. 1

complementarity between the ‘facts’.¹⁶⁵ In addition, as Bryman argues, when the two sets of data are juxtaposed new possible understandings and insights are revealed.¹⁶⁶ Bearing in mind the advantages of the mixed methods approach, I will provide greater detail on the specific methodological considerations for the oral history interview and the survey.

3.1. The oral history interview

The first oral historian was Thucydides, who interviewed people and used their information in writing the *History of the Peloponnesian War*. In 1948, Alan Nevins at Columbia University began to tape-record the spoken memories of white male elites; this was the first university-based oral history project.¹⁶⁷ In the 1960s, an interest in recording the memories of ordinary people became popular among many academics, including those in South Africa.¹⁶⁸

However, Korea was isolated from this phenomenon for a long time. It was not until 1990 that the first oral history project was published in Korea. ‘*The people’s*

¹⁶⁵ Fielding, N. (2008). Analytic density, postmodernism, and applied multiple method research. In M.M. Bergman (Ed.), *Advances in mixed methods research: Theories and applications*, UK: SAGE publication.

¹⁶⁶ Bryman, A. (2008). Why do researchers integrate/combine/mesh/mix/merge/fuse quantitative and qualitative research? In M.M. Bergman, (Ed.), *Advances in mixed methods research: Theories and applications*, UK: Sage publication.

¹⁶⁷ Bryman, A. (2008). Why do researchers integrate/combine/mesh/mix/merge/fuse quantitative and qualitative research? In M.M. Bergman, (Ed.), *Advances in mixed methods research: Theories and applications*, UK: Sage publication, p.3

¹⁶⁸ Ibid

autobiography' (*Minjung Jaseojeon in Korean*) collected the testimonies of elderly people (those in their 70s) in the rural areas of Korea.¹⁶⁹ The Korean Oral History Association was only founded in 2009, but as yet has no contact with the International Oral History Association.¹⁷⁰ Therefore, it is not surprising that ordinary Koreans do not have extensive knowledge about oral history interviews.

Ritchie argues that the oral history interview is recorded, observed and transcribed by the researcher to describe a comprehensive picture of the actions and counteractions, motives and result in human events.¹⁷¹ In my understanding, however, it is the view of the oral historians who believe they are available to test and approve the reliability of people's memory.

Indeed, reliability has been the key issue in disputes about oral methods and the history written from them since its beginning. However, the reliability of oral data has been bolstered by prominent oral historians such as Portelli, Thomson and Thompson. They agree that the subjectivity of memory provides important clues, not only about the meanings of historical experience, but also about the relationships between past and present, between memory and personal identity, and between individual and collective

¹⁶⁹ Dong-A Ilbo. (2009). 'Prof. Ham Han-Hee founding the Korea oral history association'. 20th May and Yeonhap news. (1990). 'Publishing five series of the people's autobiography by the deep rooted tree publication'. 15th March

¹⁷⁰ The reason I believe there is no contact between them is in the regional and international organizations of the Oral History Association, The Korean Oral History Association is missing from the list. Available at the website, www.iohanet.org

¹⁷¹ Ritchie, D.A. (Ed.) (2010). *The oxford handbook of oral history*, London: Oxford university press.

memory.¹⁷² In layman's terms, according to Portelli, oral sources tell us both what people did and what they wanted to do. They also shed light on what they *believed* they were doing, and what they now think they did.¹⁷³

Korean immigration history to South Africa has rarely been written. There are few sources, except the immigrants themselves who are best able to describe their own life-projects. Therefore, I follow the prominent scholars in oral history, in not only describing what happened to immigrants but also what immigration means to them, then, now and in the future.

By doing so, I aim to understand: what their motivation was, what their life plan was which would be achieved by migration, how they imagined their life before migration, how their life plan has been changed and how they feel about their life after migration.

When doing oral history interviews with Korean immigrants in Cape Town, I used an interview guide which is understood by Yow as a plan for an interview.¹⁷⁴ It contains the topics the interviewer will pursue, but does not limit the interview to those

¹⁷² Thomson, A. (2006). Four paradigm transformations in oral history, *The oral history review* 34 (1): 49-70, p. 54

¹⁷³ Portelli, A. (1991). *The death of Luigi Trastulli and other stories, Form and meaning in oral history*. New York: State university of New York press.

¹⁷⁴ Yow, V.R. (2005). *Recording oral history, A guide for the Humanities and Social Sciences*, UK: Alta Mira press, p. 71.

topics.¹⁷⁵ Interviews are conducted in Korean to promote trust and understanding between the researcher and the subject. The recorded interviews are transcribed into a written form (Korean¹⁷⁶), and archived at the Center for the Popular Memory in the University of Cape Town.¹⁷⁷

3.2. The survey

The purpose of this study's survey research is to describe the characteristics of Korean immigrants in South Africa. As mentioned earlier, one of the advantages of survey research is that it is relatively quick, cheap and easy to collect data from large populations. The self-administered questionnaires were distributed to Korean immigrants in Cape Town and collected immediately after they were completed.

When doing self-administered questionnaires, public cooperation is crucial because participation refusal is becoming more prevalent with an oversaturation of survey research.¹⁷⁸ Therefore, the study was designed with a small number of questions posed in Korean language, as opposed to English (See at appendix). Data analysis was done with the statistical computing program, Stata¹⁷⁹ by a consultant, Ms. Katya Mauff

¹⁷⁵ Ibid

¹⁷⁶ The transcription of the interviews is only provided with Korean, and not translated into English, because too much time and effort is needed for the process.

¹⁷⁷ Center for Popular Memory at the University of Cape Town, www.popularmemory.org.za

¹⁷⁸ Neuman, W.L. (2006). *Social research methods*, USA: Pearson education inc, p. 296

¹⁷⁹ Stata Corp. (2009). Stata statistical software: release 11. college station, TX: Stata Corp LP.

at the department of statistical sciences of the University of Cape Town.¹⁸⁰

In the next chapter, I explain more about the fieldwork process, both with respect to the oral history interviews and the survey. The following section will also discuss the interpretation of oral history interviews.

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CHAPTER 4. Research stories

4.1. Access strategies and fieldwork notes

This research project was conducted in Cape Town through the Korean Association and Korean churches. Korean associations are not official organizations established by the Korean government, but they do have links with the government, especially with the local embassy. The leader of the association, Mr. Jeong, shared his knowledge of Korean immigration to South Africa and provided me with a pamphlet entitled 'Korean bulletin (*Hanin heobo* in Korean)' published in 2010 by the Korean Association in South Africa (regional headquarters in Johannesburg). It contains personal information of Korean immigrants in South Africa such as their names, phone numbers, email addresses and occupations.

The South African Korean Association was established in February 1992 before the two countries agreed to establish diplomatic relations.¹⁸¹ The Overseas Koreans Foundation and the embassies are the organizations that connect the Korean Associations internationally to the Korean government.

¹⁸¹ Jeon, KS. (1996). *Korean in the world: Middle-east and Africa, Korean in the world series 9 (in English)*. Korea: Ministry of Unification, p. 181

I was invited to attend an executive meeting at the Cape Town Korean Association to meet the executive and recruit interviewees. Another source of informants was the Korean churches. Similarly to South Africa, Korean churches have also played a pivotal role for Koreans living abroad in North America.¹⁸² Historically, emigration, including that of laborers and students was supported by North American missionaries.¹⁸³ Since then, Korean churches have been important gathering places for Korean immigrants everywhere in the world.

The Korean Bulletin revealed four more Korean churches in Cape Town, in addition to church C which I have attended since 2010. I conducted the survey in the five Korean churches in Cape Town from July to August 2011. Table 4 shows the information about the churches, attendees and the survey results.

¹⁸² Lee, KG. (2000). *Overseas Koreans (in English)*, Korea: Seoul National University press, p. 177

¹⁸³ Ibid

[Table 4] Information about Korean churches in Cape Town and survey result

Name	Year of start	Location	Attendees (household)	Returned questionnaire (household)	Percentage (%)
A church	1989	Mowbray	215 (40)	17	43
B church	2002	Pinelands	150 (40)	18	45
C church	2004	Wynberg	50 (14)	11	79
D church (Catholic)	2005	Bellville	100 (35)	14	40
E church	2008	Somerset West	40 (10)	7	70
T o t a l			555 (139)	67	48

The number of attendees and households in each church reflects estimates from the ministers of each church, with the exception of church D, where the priest was away in Korea when I conducted the survey. Instead, one of the congregants estimated the number of attendees and households of church D. While church A has 215 attendees the number of household is only 40. This is because there are many students, ranging from primary school to university or short-term language students who have come to Cape Town by themselves who attend the church A. The number of households includes the ‘wild geese families’ comprised of only a mother and children. The survey was based on the household and the rate of response varied across the five churches with an average

of 48% overall.

4.2. Oral history interview: Reluctance and shame

I recruited the interviewees through the Korean Association and the Korean churches. I thought it would be difficult to do, because telling one's life story to a stranger can be a challenging emotional endeavor. It was not very easy to find interview subjects, but I did manage to secure 22 key informants. Seventeen of the interviews were recorded and five were documented with hand written notes. The written interviews occurred when participants did not want to be recorded (two) or when the researcher initially thought this was the best method.

Most interviewees were reluctant to be recorded at first, however, once I explained the method of oral history, they accepted recording. Despite this, my subjects were still very aware of it during the interview process and it made them cautious while talking. This hesitation was a large barrier in my interviews.

Why were immigrants so hesitant about being recorded? It may have been the very personal nature of the questions I was asking. Most interviewees were in their forties or older, and some had experienced the Korean War when they were infants and the subsequent military authoritarian regimes from 1963 to 1988. During the period

many people were imprisoned just because they criticized the regime. Some were executed without trial and some were killed or disabled by torture during interrogations.

The Kwangju massacre¹⁸⁴ in May 1980 and the subsequent death sentence given to the former presidential candidate Kim Dae Jung (later president) were part of the repression of the democratization movement by the military regime.¹⁸⁵ The brutality of the military regime traumatized ordinary people at the time and they still feel insecure about revealing personal information to other people. One interviewee, Mr. Cheon said he experienced the massacre when he was nineteen years old, just after he graduated from a high school in Kwangju and said “*I experienced the Kwangju situation. What was I supposed to hope there?*” The reluctance and vigilance at being recorded is best understood in this historical context.

In addition, I sensed shame as a key sentiment when immigrants talked about their decisions and life plans. Many of the interviewees such as Mr. Nam, Mr. Kyung told me that “*it was a sudden, improvised, unplanned decision to immigrate to South Africa*” and they laughed. I thought the interviewees were worried that they could be judged by their life decisions. However, after I transcribed all the interviews into written

¹⁸⁴ The name is not fixed between Kwangju situation and Kwangju massacre. In Korea, many people refer it to Kwangju situation which is a sort of euphemism in my understanding while overseas news broadcasters such as BBC refer it to Kwangju massacre.

¹⁸⁵ Chinoy, M. (1980). ‘Chun ‘purifies’ South Korea’. The Nation. 25th October.

form and read and listened to them over again, I could understand their emotions from a new perspective. I will discuss this in the Chapter 7.2 more specifically because the sentiment of shame is a strong theme resulting from their post-migration life-projects.

Elison points out that shame is conceptualized as an affect, elicited by personal devaluation.¹⁸⁶ In the same way, Tangney argues that an ashamed person experiences ‘shrinking’, feels small, worthless and powerless and is concerned with others’ evaluation of self.¹⁸⁷ As a result, Tangney insists that an ashamed person feels a desire to hide, escape from the person inducing shame and has a maladaptive tendency.¹⁸⁸ Therefore, if immigrants felt ashamed about themselves or about their decision, it would hinder their social life with local South Africans or fellow Koreans. I will discuss this in detail in the Chapter 8.1.

¹⁸⁶ Elison, J. (2005). Shame and guilt: A hundred years of apples and oranges, *New ideas of psychology*, 23 (1): 5-32, p 5.

¹⁸⁷ Silfver, M. (2007). Coping with guilt and shame: A narrative approach, *Journal of moral education*, 36(2): 169-183.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid

4.3. Survey: Different atmospheres at each church

Some ministers were very supportive of my project, while some were more indifferent. Supportive ministers announced the survey during the service and I received more survey results than those of other churches. However, all the ministers were very kind and insightful when I interviewed them in person. In family-dominant congregations it was very quiet, but in student-dominant ones it was quite loud. After the service, ministers and congregants would proceed to eat lunch together, which is the same custom as in Korea. I took the opportunity during lunch to hand out the self-administered questionnaire to church members.

The survey is based on the household so I told them about it when I handed it out to them. Some were confused about whether their spouse had done the questionnaire if they were not at a nearby table. After I handed out the questionnaire, I also had lunch with the ministers and their congregations. They expressed their interest in my project and they told me about the early immigrants that they knew of. I could also recruit some subjects for my oral history interviews during these lunches.

4.4. Interpretation of oral history interviews

In the late 1970s oral historians turned their attention to the idea that memory can provide insight into the meanings of historical experience. It can also shed light on the relationship between past and present, between memory and personal identity and between individual and collective memory.¹⁸⁹

Portelli argues that personal memories could be quite different from official memories, which subjects may distort and remake in the process of pursuing meaning.¹⁹⁰ Nevertheless, these 'wrong' memories reveal what people unconsciously *really* dreamed and desired.

For this reason, historical facts which were provided by the interviewees will be verified by the available sources such as existing literature, news articles and government papers. By doing so, I can identify possible 'wrong' memories in my interviews and interpret what they might mean for my subjects.

As Freud first taught us, memory is inherently revisionist, or an exercise in selective amnesia. What is forgotten may be just as important as what is remembered.¹⁹¹

It can be understood in an oral history interview that people remember what is tolerable

¹⁸⁹ Thomson, A. (2006). Four paradigm transformations in oral history, *The oral history review*, 34 (1): 49~70, p. 54

¹⁹⁰ Portelli, A. (1991). *The death of Luigi Trastulli and other stories, Form and meaning in oral history*. New York: State university of New York press.

¹⁹¹ Samuel, R. and Thompson, P. (Eds.) (1990). *The myths we lived by*, London: Routledge.

in the present and forget what is intolerable. Therefore, the researcher regards people's memories as the interaction between individual and society as well as the present and the past.

As Portelli points out, memory is not a passive repository of facts, but an active process of creation of meaning and justification in society.¹⁹² One example of the interaction between individual and society in memory is vividly illustrated by Thomson's analysis of Anzac memories in Australia.¹⁹³ Thomson argues that people remake or repress memories of experiences which are still painful and unsafe because they do not easily accord with their present identity, or because their inherent traumas or tensions have never been resolved.¹⁹⁴

Memories also interact between past and present. One example is Allison's illustration of how the perspectives of a war veteran about himself and the memory of a Vietnam War firefight changed significant over time. Allison argues that the memory has enriched with justification and with created coherence when social attitudes became more hospitable towards war veterans.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹² Abrams, L. (2010). *Oral history theory*, London: Routledge, p. 79

¹⁹³ Thomson, A. (2006). Anzac memories, putting popular memory theory into practice in Australia. In R. Perks and A. Thomson (Eds), *The oral history reader*, London: Routledge.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid

¹⁹⁵ Allison, F.H. (2006). Remembering a Vietnam War firefight, changing perspectives over time, In R. Perks and A. Thomson (Eds), *The oral history reader*, London: Routledge.

I believe that the perception of immigration has changed throughout time and society. As examined in the Chapter 2.2, immigrants are welcomed at certain times, and prohibited and persecuted at others. The reception of the immigrant must have affected their self-perception and experiences through time in both Korea, and South Africa.

As proved by Portelli and other oral historians, people's testimony is not only the memory of the person, but a *bricolage* of the views of themselves, community members, the mass media.¹⁹⁶ I have kept in mind the fact that memories are a product of the interaction between individuals and society as well as between the past and the present when interpreting the oral history interviews about the history of Korean immigrants in South Africa.

Lastly, telling a life story is a process of self-justification and revealing one's ambition, aspirations and hopes.¹⁹⁷ During the interviews, people talked about their dreams, desires, hopes, anxieties and frustrations. Reflecting on these stories, I will attempt to discern the personal values and aims they have sought in migrating from Korea to South Africa.

¹⁹⁶ Portelli, A. (1991). *The death of Luigi Trastulli and other stories, Form and meaning in oral history*. New York: State university of New York press.

¹⁹⁷ Samuel, R. and Thompson, P. (Eds.) (1990). *The myths we lived by*, London: Routledge, p. 10 and Portelli, A. (1991). *The death of Luigi Trastulli and other stories, Form and meaning in oral history*. New York: State university of New York press, p. 2.

CHAPTER 5. A portrait of Korean immigrants in South Africa

5.1. Short historical sketches of Korean immigrants in Cape Town

Kim might be one of the early Korean immigrants who came to Cape Town.¹⁹⁸

He was a Korean soldier sent to the Vietnam War (1960-1975). After his service in Vietnam he did not return to Korea, but instead migrated to Iran in search of a job opportunity. He happened to meet a South African in Iran and the South African gave him some information about South Africa, which brought him to Cape Town in 1982. He moved to Durban the following year in search of business opportunities. When he first went to Durban harbor there were many Korean ships anchored there and he met Korean seamen. The seamen advised him to work for them on the ship, so he started a business in Durban.

The business was successful because many Korean ships have come and gone to Durban since the mid-1970s.¹⁹⁹ It is not clear why there were many Korean ships in Durban but it might be partly because South Africa has very productive fishing grounds,

¹⁹⁸ I contacted the president of the South African Korean War Veterans Association and Mrs. Ello (the wife of late war veteran) in October 2011 to ask about the possible Korean migration to South Africa during and just after the Korean War. But they had no knowledge about it. The story of Kim was captured by the interview with Jeong, the leader of Korean Association in Cape Town

¹⁹⁹ According to Mr. Jeong, there were many Korean ships since the mid-1970s due to the importation of coal and other minerals by Korean companies. Also, there had been many Korean fishing ships since the mid-1970s because there were fishing grounds of tuna. However, there has been no 'fishery agreement' between Korea and South Africa so far.

as well as coal and other mineral resources which were essential for the economic development of Korea.²⁰⁰ One of my informants, Mr. Jeong, explains that many ships refueled in Durban harbor in the mid-1970s when the Suez Canal was closed by the Egyptian blockade during the Arab-Israeli wars (1967-1975).²⁰¹

According to another of my subjects, Mr. Min, a Korean seaman called Mr. Ma married a local coloured woman in Durban in 1984 and died in Cape Town.²⁰² There might be more Korean seamen like him who settled in South Africa, but I have not been able to find out more about them.

Kim brought his relatives from Korea and one of them was Mr. Jeong, the leader of the Korean Association in Cape Town, who came to Durban in 1987 and later moved to Cape Town in the early 1990s. Kim re-migrated to the United States at the end of 1990s for his children's education.

Two families, headed by Mr. Myung and Mr. Cho, came to Cape Town from Las Palmas in Spain in 1989.²⁰³ They were also seamen in Las Palmas. They still live in Cape Town and Mr. Cho runs a Korean restaurant and is still a seaman who exports

²⁰⁰ Department of Agriculture, forestry, and fisheries of South Africa. (1997). *White paper: Marine fisheries policy for South Africa*, Retrieved from www.info.gov.za.

²⁰¹ I cannot confirm the fact that there were many Korean ships came for fueling to Durban during the closing of Suez Canal from 1967 to 1975, but according to Lapidoth (1976), the closing of the Suez Canal to int'l shipping for eight years is true.

²⁰² According to H. Trotter (2008), there have been many South African women (Sugar girls) sell their hospitality to foreign sailors in Cape Town and Durban. But I have no information about Mr. Ma regarding this. Mr Min first talked about Mr. Ma and Mr. Jeong who worked with him confirmed the fact about him.

²⁰³ The story was captured by the interview with Mr. Min.

fishery products to Korea.

As we can see above, because Cape Town is a harbor and a fishing base, early Korean immigrants in Cape Town were related to maritime networks, such as ship chandlers and seamen. The other route for early migration was religion. However, the missionary Jeon also came through a ship, the famous missionary ship MV Doulos, to Cape Town.

After missionary Jeon and theology student Hong came to Cape Town and Stellenbosch in 1986, successors of the missionary Jeon and fellow students of Hong started migrating to Cape Town for missionary work and study from Korea. As mentioned in the Chapter 1.1, the high standard of reformed theology and moderate living expenses attracted many theology students from Korea.

Park, a minister of church E who has migrated to Cape Town in 2005, estimated that 15 to 20 percent of lecturers in seminaries in Korea had done their postgraduate study in South Africa. One of my other respondents, Mr. Hu, a minister of church B, said there have been about 90 people who finished their doctoral degrees in South Africa, and among these about 70 finished degrees in theology by 2010.²⁰⁴ Therefore, it is not strange for priests to migrate to South Africa, especially to Stellenbosch.

²⁰⁴ Mr. Hu said on 14th August 2011 in church B that a professor of Yeonsei University investigated the Korean grantee of doctoral degree in South Africa after the fake diploma scandals in Korea, and that he heard the information from the professor in 2010.

Friends and relatives of early migrants have started migrating since the 1990s, which is called sequential ('chain') migration.²⁰⁵ According to MacDonald and MacDonald, chain migration is defined as "that movement in which prospective migrants learn of opportunities, are provided with transportation, and have initial accommodation and employment arranged by means of primary social relationships with previous migrants."²⁰⁶ Some interviewees such as Mr. Jeong, Mr. Min, and Mrs. Hwang are these immigrants to some extent. They came to South Africa and have lived in Cape Town from the early 1990s onwards. Before 2000, most Korean immigrants to Cape Town came through word of mouth via acquaintances.

In the year 2000, the Korean Association of Cape Town was established and since then, families and students, especially early study abroad students have started to move to Cape Town in earnest. Church A moved its venue in 1999 right after the IMF crisis from the pastor's residence to a hired reformed church in Rondebosch due to the increase in its congregation.²⁰⁷

Considering there were 555 Korean congregants in Cape Town, there are more churches than I expected. Most ministers are also doctoral students at Stellenbosch so, if

²⁰⁵ Harzig, C. and Hoerder, D. (2009). *What is migration history*. UK: Polity press, p. 80

²⁰⁶ Johnston, R., Trlin, A., Henderson, A. and North, N. (2006). Sustaining and creating migration chains among skilled immigrant groups: Chinese, Indians and South Africans in New Zealand, *Journal of Ethics and Migration Studies*, 32(7): 1227-1250, p. 1228

²⁰⁷ Cape Town Korean church. Available at the website, www.capekoreanchurch.org

pastors want their own church, they could congregate Koreans. After they finished their degree, they moved back to Korea or elsewhere and the replacements have been successor pastors who migrated for graduate studies.

According to the minister of church A, who moved to Cape Town in 2002, he witnessed the rapid growth of his church congregation from 2003 to 2007 because Cape Town became a popular English learning destination for young Korean students and their parents. The minister of church B also supports the fact that there were many young Korean students who came to study when he came for his own postgraduate studies at Stellenbosch in 2004. He said from 2004 to 2008 most students were high school students, but since 2009 primary school students have also started to come.

Many interviewees insist that the number of Korean immigrants, including young students and tourists, decreased during and after the FIFA World Cup in 2010. They believed Korean news broadcasters emphasized the negative aspects of South Africa, such as high rates of crime and HIV/AIDS, that many Koreans cancelled their trips to South Africa. In fact, while 2,043 Korean tourists visited South Africa during the FIFA World cup in 2010,²⁰⁸ 4,369 South African tourists visited Korea in 2010.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁸ South African Tourism. (2010). 'Impact of 2010 FIFA World Cup', available at the website, www.southafrica.net/research.

²⁰⁹ Korea Immigration service, Ministry of Justice. (2011). *Korea Immigration Service statistics 2010*, Retrieved from www.moj.go.kr.

In short, there were a handful of early Korean immigrants in Cape Town in the 1980s. They were a former Vietnam War soldier, seamen, seminary students and missionaries. They had heard about Cape Town from South Africans in other countries and decided to migrate to Cape Town in the 1980s. In many cases this was related to maritime and religious networks. Their accounts about South African society are rare but it must have been positive enough to bring more immigrants from Korea.

Korean immigration to Cape Town has gradually increased during the 1990s through 'chain' migration. Since the early 2000s, Cape Town became a famous English learning destination for Korean students. It was an attractive destination because it was inexpensive, the weather was mild and the environment was beautiful.

However, it is still not clear what specific attractions Koreans found in Cape Town. There are some such as those mentioned above, but I still wonder what kind of life they had in mind, which could not be found in Korea. For this we need to examine interviewees' lives more closely.

5.2. Life stories of interviewees in Cape Town

I divided my respondents into two categories based on time-periods: those who were around during Apartheid, and those who came after the IMF crisis in Korea. Doing so enabled me to determine whether there were key differences in immigrant life stories between these two periods.

I refer to my subjects by gender and by an alias name, so as to protect their privacy. I include the year of migration of each, their ages and their migration route in South Africa. Interviewees, who migrated during Apartheid, first came to other regions of South Africa before moving to Cape Town.

5.2.1. During Apartheid South Africa

Mr. Cheon (1990, early thirties to early fifties, Mpumalanga to Cape Town)²¹⁰

He experienced the Kwangju massacre when he was a young adult. He said it was the best option for him to go abroad considering his background. He said a man without any connection such as regional and/or academic connections had no chance to be a successful man in Korea. Thus, he decided to come to Mpumalanga for three years

²¹⁰ Mr. Cheon migrated to Mpumalanga, South Africa in 1990 when he was in early thirties. He lives in Cape Town and is in his early fifties in 2011.

of overseas working experience with his wife.

However, the Korean company he worked for went bankrupt three years after his arrival and he felt guilty even though it was not his fault. He lost his confidence to go back to Korea without any success in South Africa. He might have thought if he succeeded in South Africa, it would be proof of his personal quality.

When I went to his house for the interview, it was a typical middle-class house in a suburb where most residents were white. He feels warm towards black South Africans because he has run a photo business targeting them. He was satisfied with his life in South Africa saying “*I have done all the things I wanted to do because I had time here.*” Also, he values the South African way of education in which children could play and study whereas Korean education only focuses on study.

He wants to go back to Korea in ten years even though he believes the quality of life is better in South Africa. He misses his kin in Korea and one of his South African born daughters attends a Korean University.

Mr. Min (1990, forty four to sixty five, Stellenbosch to Cape Town)

South Africa was a paradise to him when he first visited his sister-in-law who was a doctorate student with her husband at Stellenbosch, in 1990. He enumerates the advantages of living in South Africa in 1990. It was safe, the prices were low, the natural environment was perfect, there was strong existing infrastructure, the educational environment was good and the language was English.

He wanted to make a change in his repetitive everyday life in Seoul so he migrated to South Africa with his family. He had a business plan in his mind but it has not been achieved in Cape Town. He was an opinionated husband and father when he decided on immigration to South Africa. His wife hesitated to come and his children were not asked about it even though they were 15 and 13 years old.

When he arrived, he was impressed by warm neighbors. He was the only non-white resident in the neighborhood, but it made his neighbors curious about his family from an Asian country. His neighbors expressed their warm welcome to his family and they were on intimate terms, which Koreans had already lost at home during the rapid economic development.

One of his sons works in Johannesburg and the other runs a small business in Cape Town. They are both married to Korean women who have also come to South

Africa from Korea. When he talked about his sons he felt sorry about them. They have not been asked about immigration to South Africa, but they had to deal with difficulties after arrival. He has no specific plan for the future, whether he enjoys the rest of his life in Cape Town or not.

Mr. Han (1991, twenty eight to forty eight, Johannesburg to Cape Town), and

Mrs. Han (1992, twenty nine to forty eight, Johannesburg to Cape Town)

Mr. Han was a romantic guy and when his future employer called him and offered him work in South Africa, he thought it would be a good opportunity to do something where nothing had been done. Right after his arrival in Johannesburg in 1991 he realized it was an advanced industrial society. The country in all aspects was enormously good to him. He perceived it much like Mr. Min – as a paradise. Enjoying it so much, he stayed on after the first three years which he planned to work in South Africa.

They loved and enjoyed their life in Johannesburg and especially liked white South Africans whom they felt observed public order thoroughly in the early 1990s. This opened their eyes to a new way of life with white South Africans who they perceived to be especially considerate of others and knew how to live with others in

harmony in a paradise which is designed exclusively for white South Africans.

According to Mr. Han, everybody was kind and would help others at all times. Not only adults but also children spent time taking care of younger children in a playground. The intimacy and the ethics of white South Africans were so much higher than those of Koreans so that they were reluctant to go back to Korea for their children.

After the Korean company where he worked went bankrupt in 1998, following the IMF crisis in Korea, they moved to Cape Town in 2001. Even though white South Africans became hardhearted after democratization, the Han's still felt warm towards South Africans. They were satisfied with their life in South Africa because they could live with good people and their children were getting a good education.

5.2.2. After the IMF crisis in Korea

Mr. Seok and Mrs. Seok (1999, 45 to 57 and 43 to 55, Cape Town)

Mrs. Seok had begged for migration to another country for over ten years. She did not like living in Korea because it was too busy for her, with family and friends events such as weddings, funerals. In addition, Korean education was too stressful for both mother and son. Mr. Seok opposed migration for ten years, but after his early

retirement during the IMF crisis he made up his mind to migrate to another country.

It was Canada at first, but one of their acquaintances talked about South Africa and Mr. Seok came to see if it was good to live here in 1997. He was impressed by the local children who played in a grass schoolyard freely. It was almost like a European country. He made a decision to immigrate to Cape Town in 1999. Mrs. Seok was impressed by the kind people who always smiled at her. Neither could remember any racial discrimination towards them in South Africa.

After graduating from high school in Cape Town, their only son now attends university in the United States. He intends to return to South Africa after graduation. Mrs. Seok, however, experienced racial discrimination when she visited her son in the United States and said she was very unhappy about that. They have a plan to go back to Korea when they are old, but Mrs. Seok is reluctant to return saying, *“My friends are opposed to the return because living in Korea is getting harsher and harsher.”*

Mr. Jin (2004, thirty six to forty three, Cape Town)

Mr. Jin was unhappy with his life in Seoul although he was a promising salesman in a pharmaceutical company. The workload was too heavy and there was no relaxation, even on weekends. During weekdays he had to drink with customers after work and over weekends he had to play golf with them. It made his relation with his wife worse so, he decided to change his life.

Initially, he did not think that it was (permanent) immigration. He came to Cape Town in 2004 with his wife and four- and three-year old children to see if there was anything for them here. But six years later, he said, they became immigrants. He wanted to be a professional golfer, changing his life to one where he only played golf.

He and his wife are the agents of a Korean immigrants support agency and he has helped new immigrants to adapt to the new environment of Cape Town. He is also the guardian of a few Korean students who came to Cape Town by themselves. He takes care of them like a parent and is always busy taking care of children. As a result, he had to give up his dream of becoming a golfer.

However, he is happy with his life in Cape Town. It is not because he achieved something great, but he feels he is a good husband and father to his family. When he worked in Korea he felt isolated from his family because he felt he was just a

breadwinner. Here in Cape Town, despite having had some difficulties earning money, he feels he is a more involved member of his family. Also he is satisfied with his children's education in Cape Town, where he sees his son maturing faster than other Korean boys his age.

Mr. Kyung (2004, forty three to fifty, Cape Town) and Mrs. Kyung (2002, thirty nine to forty eight, Cape Town)

They were initially a wild geese family and Mr. Kyung remained behind and worked in Seoul to support his family. Mrs. Kyung came to Cape Town with her two children aged eleven and ten in 2002 for their education in English. After two years apart, Mr. Kyung joined his family. They do not think of themselves as immigrants, instead choosing the self-perception and motivation that they have come to Cape Town for their children's education.

It was their son who was begging to study abroad. He was an ambitious student and felt jealous of a girl whose English was more fluent because she lived in the United States for several years. But they could not afford to send their son to the United States. Their reasons for moving to Cape Town were the low cost English education. In addition, she was fascinated by the beautiful environment when she first visited Cape

Town and she felt she wanted to live in a place like this.

They distrust local South Africans whom they perceived to be habitual liars and white supremacists. As a result, they usually spend most of time with fellow Koreans, especially with those in the church so that they do not feel any social isolation. They are satisfied with the life in Cape Town when they compare it to their possible life in Korea where every man and woman must take part in every family and social event, and pay particular attention to living up to social expectations. Now, they do not have those events and expectations anymore and the family has more time to spend with each other, allowing them to feel closer than they did before migration. However, they do feel anxieties when they think about their family's future.

Mrs. Kim (2005, forty two to forty eight, Cape Town)

Mrs. Kim has been a mother of a wild geese family since 2005. Her husband is a manager of a trading company and is always busy, which affected her decision to immigrate. She loves spending time with her family, but her husband was always busy, leaving her feeling like a second priority. In the meantime, Korean society was facing English education fever and she decided to study theology and educate her two sons in English.

It was her who proposed studying abroad to her children. Her children and husband were indifferent. She chose South Africa when she could afford to go to Canada or other English speaking countries because she wanted warm weather. She planned to stay in Cape Town for three years initially, but it has been prolonged to six years so far. It is because she and her family thought that her eldest son could not adapt to Korean school after three years away.

Her family has maintained two households, one in Seoul and the other in Cape Town, for six years. This is a very expensive option, but Mrs. Kim thinks she would have spent the same amount of money for private education in Seoul even if she did not come to Cape Town, so she does not regret the expense. However, she regrets her decision to split the family. She feels this way despite the fact that she enjoys her life in Cape Town where life is more relaxed. She is also happy with her little son who has found his own niche in Cape Town.

Mrs. Hwang (2009, forty to forty three, Cape Town)

Mrs. Hwang was a freelance book designer and a housewife. Her husband had been an employee of a gas company for ten years but lost his job in the mid-2000s. He tried to find a job, or start their own business, but both attempts were unsuccessful. She

just wanted to leave Korea where her son did not find any interest in school and they could not find something they wanted to do.

However, she was unwilling to move to Cape Town due to the high crime rate so she went to Australia with her son to see if there was a possibility of staying. She stayed there for six months then moved to Cape Town where her husband wanted to live and run a small restaurant. Not long before they arrived, they realized that a small restaurant was not a feasible business venture with their funds.

After a year, her husband returned to Korea to get a job and support his family in Cape Town. The reason why she and her son stayed on in Cape Town was her son's education. In addition, she does not want to return to Korea because she felt they had nothing left in Korea anymore, since their apartment and car in Seoul are no longer there.

She does not know much about her South African neighbors and its society, partly because of her language difficulties and partly because she spends most of her time with church friends. She intends to go back to Korea when her son is of university going age.

CHAPTER 6. Let us leave for anywhere

6.1. 'Strategic cosmopolitan' desire²¹¹

It is clear from the above testimonies that English learning and/or study in English has been a powerful factor in the decision to migrate to South Africa. As Mitchell points out, the relative ease of border-crossing and the emergent global market have made going abroad for education a possible and desirable option for Koreans.²¹²

Admittedly, many Korean parents believe that English education provides their children with new experiences that broaden their perspectives and provide them with an opportunity for cosmopolitan citizenship, which is acquired by virtue of the linguistic and economic aspects of global English.²¹³ Therefore, there have been many wild geese families coming to South Africa to educate their children in English since the early 2000s. They may have believed that the two or three years which a mother and her children spent in South Africa provided a foundation for becoming 'a global person.'²¹⁴

This is confirmed by my survey results where nine out of thirteen (69 percent) wild geese families answered that they came to Cape Town mainly for their children's

²¹¹ An, S.H. (2009). Learning US history in an age of globalization and transnational migration, *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 41 (6): 763-787, p. 765

²¹² Ibid

²¹³ Song, J. (2010). Language ideology and identity in transnational space: globalization, migration, and bilingualism among Korean families in the USA. *International journal of bilingual education and bilingualism*, 13 (1): 23-42, p. 33

²¹⁴ Ibid

English education. In addition, twenty five out of fifty two (48 percent) nuclear family households answered that they migrated to Cape Town mainly for their own study and/or for their children's study in English.²¹⁵ As Song argues, many Korean immigrants regard English education to the best investment in their children's future and have migrated to Cape Town for a limited period.²¹⁶

However, when it comes to the motivations for family migration, it seems to me an insufficient answer to say that whole families come to study in English and become cosmopolitan. Family members have different roles in society as well as within their family. Some members need to make money to support the family and participate in society. My interviewees all held college graduate diplomas or higher except one, so that they must have learned English as a second language for at least six years. That said all my interviewees except one said that they did not speak English well. Without a language proficiency in the lingua franca of the host country, what then made them decide to migrate to South Africa?

In addition, as we saw in the Chapter 5.2, some wild geese families have extended their sojourn, and some husbands and other members have joined families in

²¹⁵ Those households choose for study in English as a primary motivation for their migration in my survey result.

²¹⁶ Song, J. (2010). Language ideology and identity in transnational space: globalization, migration, and bilingualism among Korean families in the USA. *International journal of bilingual education and bilingualism*, 13 (1): 23-42, p. 30.

Cape Town. How can we explain this phenomenon? According to a minister in church A, a wild geese family in his church has extended their stay in Cape Town to nine years so far. Is this simply a ‘cosmopolitan aspiration’?

According to Harzig and Hoerder, migrants carefully evaluate information and compare options, since their limited means do not permit experimentation.²¹⁷ When whole families decide to migrate to a foreign country, there must have been a plan for what they were going to do and what they wanted to achieve in the specific foreign country. Let me then examine Korean immigrants’ life before migration and the background to their migration decision in their society of origin.

6.2. Men who were frustrated by their lives

Many interviewees remembered negative aspects of lives in Korea when I asked about the time when they first thought about migration to a foreign country. Korean society was the place in their memories where their dreams and ambitions were created and subsequently dashed. It was also the place where busy and repetitive everyday life wore down their morale. Abbott claims that “bad times in a country regularly increase emigration of the people of the country.”²¹⁸

²¹⁷ Harzig, C. and Hoerder, D. (2009). *What is migration history*. UK: Polity press, p. 91.

²¹⁸ Abbott, E. (1926). *Historical aspects of the immigration problem*. Chicago: The University of

In the background of their migration, many male immigrants experienced dismissals including lay-offs or early/involuntary retirements against the backdrop of the Asian financial crisis. Those experiences helped them to think about migration as a break with the bad times.

[I] was desperately opposed (to the emigration).... I came here at forty-four, so I already had personal connections, job, especially I had a job so, I could not dare to think about emigration. But, there were some problems in my companyIMF was broken out then the company started to lay-off its employees.

- Mr. Seok

[A]t first..., a company where my husband had worked over ten years was closed due to the economic recession. Still the economic condition is very hard in Korea....but at that time it was severe.... My husband had looked for a job for three years (but failed)It was difficult to live a life in Korea further. Living expenses were high.

- Mrs. Hwang

In addition, unstable employment affected their decision to migrate as a way to overcome the problems they faced in Korean society. Mr. Kyung had been a wild geese father for two years and joined his family in Cape Town. In my discussion with him, I attempted to uncover what factors played a role in him deciding to join his family abroad.

Researcher: How did you make up your mind to join your family even though you had a job in Korea, I guess?

Mr. Kyung: I had worked for an electronics company as a manager for ten years. Then I worked as a freelance salesman. I thought my children's education was more important (than my job) and my family was important.

Mr. Kyung prioritizes his children's education and family first, with his work or means of livelihood coming second. As Lee and Koo argue, the 'wild geese family' arrangement is not the natural outcome of the overflowing affluence of upper or upper-middle-class families.²¹⁹ Fathers stay behind in Korea, usually because there is an opportunity of income to support his family.²²⁰ Therefore, I believe that the insecurity about Mr. Kyung's job in Korea affected his decision to join his family to look for a new opportunity in Cape Town.

Some felt an exclusion from the mainstream of Korean society due to social prejudices which made them look for another way to escape from the *status quo*. Others felt exhausted by too much work loaded on them.

²¹⁹ Lee, Y.J. and Koo, H. (2006). Wild geese fathers and a globalized family strategy for education in Korea, *IDPR*, 28 (4): 533-553, p. 548.

²²⁰ An, S.H. (2009). Learning US history in an age of globalization and transnational migration, *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 41 (6): 763-787, p. 766

[I] worked for a trading company in Korea...I graduated from a rural university and it was nothing great. You know Korean society. Don't you? School relations, kinship, regionalism. What could I expect to be in Korean society as a person who did not have money and connections, especially from Kwangju. I experienced the Kwangju situation.

- Mr. Cheon²²¹

[T]he work load was heavy, very heavy. That affected my personal life that I was under a lot of stress after work. My wife and I often quarrel and my health had deteriorated in the end. Thus, I thought 'should I live like this?'

- Mr. Jin

[W]e have married in 1986. Since then we had met only at night for over twenty years. We could spend time together only on public holidays and Sundays.....As most Koreans did, we could not have much time for deep conversation between husband and wife. Therefore, we came here to see each other's faces everyday. (laugh)

- Mr. Bae

Mr. Cheon felt he could not avoid the exclusion from the mainstream of the society because of his lack of connections and a good academic background. Mr. Seok and Mr. Jin also graduated from a rural university and migrated from Honam (southwest region) to Seoul after graduation.²²² Social prejudices against rural university graduates

²²¹ According to E.H. Shin (2004, p.25), regionalism in political context emerged in the 1970s. In the 7th presidential election of 1971, the former president Park Chung Hee manipulated the regional sentiments and exploited the regional conflicts for his own political benefit. Shin, EH. (2004). Correlates of the 2002 Presidential election in South Korea:Regionalism, the generation gap, anti-Americanism, and the North Korea factor, *East Asia* 21 (2): 18-38

²²² According to E.H. Shin (2004, p. 25), the former president Park Chung Hee who was from Yeongnam

and people from certain regions have affected people's decision to migrate.

Mr. Jin and Mr. Bae were extremely busy and felt exhausted because of their work loads. Like Mrs. Hwang's husband, who had installed gas pipes day and night for ten years, they worked long hours to complete the work as fast as possible. Such sacrifice contributed to the rapid economic development of Korea, however, they were no longer needed after that goal was achieved.

Some of my informants had foreign experiences before they migrated to South Africa so that they knew that their lives were not necessarily bound to the national territory. Therefore, they could make up their mind to migrate to South Africa to avoid dismissals, and social prejudices in Korea.

[T]he social atmosphere at the time (early 1990s) was that people were longing for emigration. We lived in a repetitive everyday life so that people who have money wanted to move to other countries to enhance the quality of life in addition to the children's education...I thought it would be nice to change the life because men in my age were same at spending spare time.

- Mr. Min

(southeast region) used an animosity between Honam and Yeongnam in the 7th presidential election of 1971, in which Kim Dae Jung who was from Honam ran against Park Chung Hee.

[I]t was too boring to work in where everything was the same for ten years. And I wanted to do something new....and I thought 'from now I should live to do something what I want to do....something meaningful.

- Mr. Nam

According to my interviewees, people in Korea generally long for migration to other countries and Mr. Min said that “*if people could afford to migrate to other country they would go.*” A survey result of the Overseas Koreans Foundation in 2007 also supports the fact that 51 percent of informants of the survey answered that they had considered immigration to other countries to find new opportunities.²²³ Immigration was something many Koreans wanted or longed for from the early 1990s onwards, so that my interviewees could proudly announce their migration decision to their family and friends in Korea.

In conclusion, male immigrants had experienced frustration in various forms in their lives in Korea. These experiences affected them and motivated them to reflect upon their lives. They fulfilled their material needs to some extent, but they did not feel that they lived meaningful lives at work. They wanted to be respected and loved in family and in society, and enjoy a life with time for leisure activities. In addition, social circumstances are often favorable towards migrants to foreign countries. Therefore, they

²²³ The survey is occurred in 2007 throughout 708 adult men and women in seven metropolitan cities in Korea by the Overseas Koreans Foundation. Available at the website, www.okf.or.kr

wanted to change their life and looked for possibilities in other social settings which were different from Korea.

6.3. Women as initiators of migration

In my oral history interviews, many female interviewees confessed that they were the initiator of immigration in their family. However, there was a difference between the early 1990s and the late 1990s. While men were the major decision makers on migration in the early 1990s, from the late 1990s, women were. In my interviews, all three male respondents who migrated to South Africa in the early 1990s were the major final say in their family's migration; two of them were sent by Korean companies to South Africa and one decided to migrate even though his wife was reluctant.

One of my female interviewees who migrated to South Africa in 1999 had begged her husband for ten years and others appealed for several years. Many female interviewees said that it was their children's education in an English speaking country, which pushed them into advocating immigration to South Africa from the late 1990s.

However, considering the fact that some of the children who were brought over were only two years old, it seems too early to consider their children's education for some families. Eleven out of seventeen households of my interviewees migrated with

children. In addition, three households out of eleven came with children under the age of five. Nevertheless, no single household that came with children excluded the children's education from their motivations. The question here is whether the children's education was really the major motivation for female immigrants in immigrating to South Africa.

In the women's accounts of their migration decision I find reasons other than devotion to their children's education. When asked to compare their lives in Cape Town to their lives in Seoul, my respondents said:

[W]e have more time here. We had to take care of all the family matters like wedding, funeral, holidays, ancestral rites, etc. and we had to worry about what people said (about us in Korea). However, we do not have to worry about those things here.

- Mrs. Kyung

[A]fter we got married...it is very busy in Korea, isn't it? There are many family matters too. I wonder if my wife wanted it (immigration) because of those things (many family matters).

- Mr. Seok

[I] did not like taking part in many family and friends matters. In addition, I had a dream to live in other country before I married.....but my son's education was the major motivation among others.

- Mrs. Seok

As a homemaker as well as a daughter-in-law, women were in charge of all the family matters of extended kin such as parents' anniversaries, ancestral rites, weddings and funerals. According to Kim, educated women are perceived as professional housewives who take on the roles of family administrators and kin workers in the late-capitalistic state of Korea.²²⁴ Even though the eldest son was not supposed to live with his parents after marriage since the nuclearization of the modern Korean families in the 1990s, the role of the daughter-in-law is not confined to the nuclear family.²²⁵ As a result, females wanted to escape from all the burdens and people's judgments about their duties.

[M]y husband is the eldest son of the family. Therefore, we had difficulties for the immigration (due to the opposition of the husband's parents).

- Mrs. Bae

(My parents said) 'Are you going to shift all the responsibilities to your younger brother and you just leave?'

Mr. Bae

(So I said to my parents-in-law) 'No, no. That is not true. We are going to let our children study abroad only for three or four years. And he also needs to learn English.' We said like that and came here. However, the circumstance has been changed. But we did not mean that we would do this (long-term immigration) at first. (laugh)

- Mrs. Bae

²²⁴ Kim, M.H. (1996). Changing relationships between daughters-in-law and mothers-in-law in urban South Korea. *Anthropological Quarterly*, 69 (4): 179-192, p. 195.

²²⁵ Ibid

On top of this, a conflict with their husbands who had to work day and night in Korean society and frustrations with their own working life in Seoul affected females decisions on migration. For the double-income family, like Mrs. Hwang, the role of the female might be more difficult than that of professional housewives.

[I] had to work for a living and it was hard....I had a lot of work so, I had to work until mid-night. I could not take care of my child when I worked until mid-night.

- Mrs. Hwang

[A]mong the motivations, well, children' education....And there were my personal difficulties. My husband was too busy that we hardly could see him at home. I really liked to do something with my family but it was very hard to be accepted...Then I thought we could study abroad for about three years including myself.

- Mrs. Kim

Whether they were housewives or career women they were all affected by the hectic pace of Korean society. As career women, they could hardly find enough time for bringing up their children. For housewives, their complaint about their extremely busy husbands worsened over time. In addition, as a family administrator and extended kin worker, they also felt pressure from extended family. Therefore, they needed to find a way to overcome these challenges and profit their family. I argue that these challenges they faced in Korea led them to become initiators of immigration to South Africa.

6.4. Improvised, unplanned and sudden decisions

Many of my informants asserted that their immigration was not a fixed life plan. They recognized the dynamic fluctuations of life and that their immigration life can be quickly adjusted to changed circumstances. However, their initial plan is still an important guide to understanding why and how men and women migrate. As we examined above, their departure decisions were closely related to frustrations with their lives in Korea.

When they first thought about migration, they had experienced frustrations with their lives in Korea and needed to find another way to achieve future prosperity in various respects. Prosperity is not only economic, but also involves social and societal well-being. I have already discussed what social circumstances Korean immigrants in South Africa wanted to escape from. Now, I will focus on the life plans which they expected to achieve in South Africa.

Interestingly, from my survey results and interviews, I noticed two crucial periods in interviewees' lives: ten years and three years. Ten years was typically the period they were employed in a company before they were dismissed or they decided to quit. Mrs. Hwang's husband was dismissed after ten years after the installation of gas pipes were completed, and some managerial staff like Mr. Kyung and Mr. Seok had

fallen behind in the pyramid structure of the company hierarchy.

My survey result also found significance in the 10 year theme. The mean age of the head of household is 39 and of the spouse 36 when they immigrate to Cape Town. The median age is almost the same as the mean that of the head is 39 and the spouse 35. Considering the age of university graduates plus the two years of compulsory military service of all Korean males, most males start their careers at the end of their twenties. It seems, therefore, that after ten years of employment, most of my respondents felt inclined to pursue migration out of Korea, in search of a 'better life'.

Before the IMF crisis, many Koreans considered their job to be life-long employment. However, after the crisis, Koreans had to find new jobs after a decade of employment, since the flexibility of labor and the restructuring of companies were beginning. However, like Mrs. Hwang's husband who tried to find a new job for three years before migrating to Cape Town, many people could not find a new job in Korea. I believe that one way of resolving the problem was immigration to Cape Town.

Three-years might be the ideal duration in Koreans' mind for their stay in a foreign country. Mr. Cheon, Mr. Han, and Mrs. Kim all initially planned to stay in South Africa for three years. After they came, their stay has been extended, and for some it has become permanent. As we have seen in the Chapter 5.2, some people still do not self-

identify as immigrants; they just came to complete their life plan. I believe many Koreans have a three-year period in mind as the appropriate length of a foreign experience for learning English. The survey results support this claim, with 38 percent of immigrants in my survey migrating to South Africa after 2009.²²⁶

My interviewees invariably visited South Africa before migrating. They could not find enough information about South Africa otherwise and wanted to see it first. After their visits, most said that they decided immediately to migrate to South Africa. They describe their decision as improvised and unplanned.

[I] knew about Cape Town quite well since I lived in the United States. This is not an African city, but the Europeanized city built by the Europeans, and they speak English. So, I thought what if I live there? I just came with such an improvised, unplanned decision.

- Mr. Nam

[I] could not dare to think the immigration before I quit....Because I had a job and my friends.....But after I quit, I could make up my mind (to decide immigration). Then, why don't I live abroad?

Mr. Seok

²²⁶ According to my survey result, 90 immigrants among 234 came to Cape Town after 2009.

It is a clear trend emerging from the data that one of the most important factors for Korean immigration to South Africa is learning and/or studying in English. This has been the only fixed plan for many immigrants before migration. Apart from English, nothing has been planned such as a job or business opportunities for subsistence hence people refer to their decision as improvised, unplanned. An improvised plan which lacked a source of future income made interviewees embarrassed when they talked about their immigration to the researcher. Social prejudices and the deprivation of job, time and energy in the society of dynamic economic growth pushed people into a position of deciding “*Let us leave first, and then think about what to do*”. This might be the reasonable but unstated answer to their improvised plan for migration.

Conclusion

Behind the ‘strategic cosmopolitan’ desire, migrant men and women were frustrated by dismissals, unstable employment, social prejudices and lack of time and energy to share with their families in Korea. They wanted to leave from a place where social prejudices restricted men and women to limited roles in society. For men these were academic, regional background and kinship. For women, these were the large burden as daughters-in-law, who were the family administrators.

In addition, during and after the rapid economic growth and the IMF crisis, men and women experienced heavy workloads which prevented them from spending time with their families and building meaningful careers. As a result, family relations had been distorted and workers felt boredom in their work lives. They wanted to overcome these social pressures and fulfill their well-being and personal values to experience a meaningful work life, and sound relationship with family and society. These desires motivated men and women to decide to migrate to South Africa with an improvised plan which included educating their children in English but excluded a means of livelihood in a foreign country.

CHAPTER 7. In search of a better life

7.1. Little Europe in Africa

When I asked my respondents about their knowledge of South Africa before their migration to Cape Town, most confessed that they did not have much information. What they understood about Cape Town was that it was ‘little Europe in Africa’ as the tour guide brochures put it.²²⁷ They believed that they could get a European style education in English if they came to Cape Town.

What does ‘little Europe in Africa’ mean to Korean immigrants in South Africa? I interpret it as a place where white Europeans reside, European culture is dominant and social infrastructure is similar to that of Europe. Then, what does ‘Europe’ represent for Korean immigrants? According to Veil, the former president of the European parliament, it represents the advanced industrial society and the modern civilization.²²⁸ The concept by Veil is so broad and elusive that I need to investigate what made Korean immigrants perceive the South African society as ‘little Europe’.

Firstly, most Korean immigrants in Cape Town reside in predominantly white neighborhoods so that they usually meet white South Africans who are the descendants

²²⁷ Random house. (2009). *South Africa: overseas tour guide*, Korea: Random house Korea.

²²⁸ Tretter, E. (2011). The ‘value’ of Europe: The political economy of culture in the European community. *Geopolitics*, 16: 926-948, p. 926

of European settlers and immigrants.²²⁹ For most of the twentieth century, immigration in South Africa meant white immigration.²³⁰ In addition, during the Apartheid era, white South Africans were classified as Europeans by the Group Areas Act so that it is not surprising that Korean immigrants perceive their neighbors as 'Europeans'.²³¹

The Korean immigrants that I spoke to reported having positive feelings toward white South Africans. Mr. Min settled in a neighborhood where he was the only non-white when he first migrated to South Africa in 1990 and felt warmth from his neighbors.

[W]hat I was very impressed with was.....the close interaction with neighbors. My neighbors gathered every week brought with their food and shared their friendship, which is called 'bring and braai.'....Also my neighbors visited my place and welcomed my moving into the neighborhood. One old lady brought two roses to me saying 'welcome'.

- Mr. Min

Mr. Han vividly remembered when he first arrived in South Africa in 1991. To him, it was almost like Europe where houses were so beautiful and everything (social

²²⁹ My survey result and interviews confirmed that Korean immigrants live in white dominant areas such as Durbanville, Pinelands, Claremont, Somerset West etc. People's testimonies refer the areas to white dominant areas which historically occupied by white South Africans during Apartheid. Source: Mabin, A. (1992). Comprehensive segregation: the origins of the Group Areas Act and its planning apparatuses, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 18 (2): 405-429, p. 414

²³⁰ Peberdy, S. (2009). *Selecting Immigrants: National identity and South Africa's immigration policies 1910-2008*. Johannesburg: Wits University press, p. 4

²³¹ Mabin, A. (1992). Comprehensive segregation: the origins of the Group Areas Act and its planning apparatuses. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 18 (2): 405-429, p. 416

infrastructure) was there. He said he realized the quality of life and well-being after he made friends with white South Africans. In addition, he appreciated a high sense of ethics of South Africans because they observed public order thoroughly and were considerate of others.

[W]e had many friends in Johannesburg. They were very nice. We gathered once a month and having braai, ate and danced....One of our friends offered us renting his house without rent when our small business had economic hardship.

- Mr. Han

[I] realized the high sense of ethics of South Africans. In a certain society (Korean society) it seemed clever when a person offended a rule such as cutting in line. But other societies (South Africa) there are no offending the rule....When I had a problem with my car, other drivers stopped their cars and asked if I needed any help. A driver even went to repair my flat tire to where taking two hours driving....When I went to a children's playground with my daughter, two white girls came and played with my young daughter. They not only played with my daughter but also took care of my daughter. I cannot think of those kind attitudes in Korean girls. Korean girls are always busy for their own study.

- Mrs. Han

My informants who migrated to South Africa during Apartheid seemed to feel that they were accepted as neighbors. Being accepted must have affected immigrants' positive feelings towards white South Africans and their sense of belonging to white South African society, seems similar to the 'honorary white' status which the Japanese had acquired since the 1960s.

This sense of belonging to white South African society seems not to have changed after democratization. They seemed to admit that South Africa is culturally and ethnically diverse society after democratization, but when they talked about their experiences with South Africans, they usually talked about their experiences with white South Africans. Let us see more about people's accounts.

[W]hat I was impressed with were people who smiled at me. When I first came here someone was smiling at me but I did not know that she smiled at me. I thought there was her acquaintance around me....These people smile at everyone to whom they meet.

- Mrs. Seok

[I] think South Africa is a very attractive country because there are few societies which have such a diverse culture in a society. South African society is very diverse that there is no hierarchy. I think the society is more open to others than European countries.....Cape Town is where white people are dominant among other cities in South Africa....90% is black people but, to be honest, I do not have many occasions to meet black South Africans here.

- Mrs. Ha

[C]ultural difference? What cultural difference? We all live in the same planet. But what is different from us (Koreans) is they more easily felt happy for simple things. One day I went for a picnic with my family to a mountain suburb. At the mountain ridge, I met an old couple who brought a picnic basket and a table in their car....When I saw them having wine in the picturesque mountain, I envied them so much. So, I bought a picnic basket and a table after the picnic but I have used them only twice during my twenty years of staying (laugh).

- Mr. Min

Mr. and Mrs. Han, Mrs. Seok, Mrs. Ha and Mr. Min said they wanted to learn the attitudes and lifestyles from South Africans. When Koreans say they want to learn from others, it means that others have something superior. I believe that Korean immigrants regard these attitudes and lifestyle of white South Africans as the basis of well-being.

Therefore, I argue that those personal values of white South Africans, such as the kindness of people who smile at strangers, consideration to help others, a high sense of ethics and living in harmony with neighbors, had an effect on Korean immigrants' stay. As a result, they could extend their sojourn to long term or even permanent residence. The lifestyle and culture of white South Africans were perceived as superior by Korean immigrants even though the economic data shows that Korea has been a more affluent society than South Africa for over two decades.²³²

Inglehart argues that there is practically no relationship between income level and subjective well being when it reaches the threshold of USD10,000 among the industrial societies.²³³ Nevertheless South Africa's GNI per capita is USD6,090 as of 2010 we should consider the history of South Africa's apartheid policy.²³⁴ The country

²³² The World Bank data show that Korean GNI per capita has been higher than that of South African from 1985. available at the website, <http://data.worldbank.org>

²³³ Inglehart, R. (2000). Globalization and postmodern values. *The Washington quarterly*, 23 (1): 215-228. p. 217

²³⁴ Data are from the World Bank, Available at the website, <http://data.worldbank.org>

has been formed through separation between white and non-white and the economic standards such as income, occupational status have been completely different between the two groups.²³⁵ As a result, the economic standards of white South Africans must have been similar or higher to those of Koreans which is recorded to USD19,890 per capita per annum in 2010.²³⁶

The economic prosperity of white South Africans, as a result of the apartheid history, made people pursue the higher personal values such as self-expression and quality of life rather than economic and physical security.²³⁷ These values however were pursued at the expense of other ethnic groups including Asians and Africans historically. These personal values and lifestyles of the 'Europeans', which represented the personal values of 'modern civilization', have influenced Korean immigrants who also wanted to pursue these values and lifestyles. Attaining these goals could lead to Korean immigrants' extended stay in South Africa.

²³⁵ Treiman, D.J., McKeever, M., Fodor, E. (1996). Racial differences in occupational status and income in South Africa, 1980 and 1991. *Demography*, 33 (1): 111-132.

²³⁶ Ibid; World Bank, available at the website, <http://data.worldbank.org>

²³⁷ Inglehart, R. (2000). Globalization and postmodern values. *The Washington quarterly*, 23 (1): 215-228, p. 220

7.2. Post-migration life projects: Means of livelihood

Democratization of South Africa has not been a watershed for Korean immigration to South Africa in terms of increasing their number. Instead, it was 1999 and 2005 when the number doubled.²³⁸ Many Koreans immigrated to South Africa after the IMF crisis in Korea and many students and their family moved to South Africa since the mid 2000s, after the nation-wide fever on 'early study abroad' started in Korea.²³⁹

Harzig and Hoerder argue that migrants bring their human capital (such as social skills, professional expertise) and their social capital (such as the ability to mobilize resources, to use structures and institutions) and their savings or investment capital.²⁴⁰ However, while the last is transferred most easily, human capital may not be useful in the new social and economic conditions.²⁴¹ It has been true for many Korean immigrants that they engaged in ethnic businesses which Waldinger et al. characterizes as the interaction between the opportunity structure of the host society and the group characteristics and social structure of the immigrant community.²⁴²

²³⁸ See the Table 2

²³⁹ According to S.H. An (2009), the 'early study abroad' started in the late 1990s but it became popular in the society after the early 2000s.

²⁴⁰ Harzig, C. and Hoerder, D. (2009). *What is migration history*. UK: Polity press.

²⁴¹ Ibid

²⁴² Waldinger, R., Ward, R., Aldrich, H. E. and Stanfield, J. H. (1990). Ethnic Entrepreneurs: Immigrant Business in Industrial Societies. *University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign's Academy for Entrepreneurial Leadership Historical Research Reference in Entrepreneurship*. Available at SSRN: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1496219>.

My interviews revealed that many Korean immigrants in Cape Town are engaged in small businesses, such as tourist related jobs, guardians for early study abroad students, agents of immigrants' support, internet cafes, Korean grocery stores, Asian restaurants, hairdressers, coffee shops and car mechanics. Some services are offered to local South Africans, but most deal exclusively with compatriots. The entry barriers into small-scale enterprises are relatively lower for immigrants with limited capital in Cape Town.

In addition, the demand for these services prompted their supply. After democratization many Koreans looked to South Africa as a tourist destination as well as a place for learning English.²⁴³ Since the early immigrants sent back information, sequential migration has started. As Harzig and Hoerder argue, the information sent back is the social capital of the 'migrant-in-waiting' and whose arrival with human capital then increases the social capital of the previous/prior migrants.²⁴⁴ This applied to Korean immigrants in Cape Town and some later immigrants have been employed by the earlier immigrants and some have been customers for the businesses.

²⁴³ There were 87 news articles about South African tourism at a news library, which is comprised of four dailies, Dong-A, Kyung-Hyang, Mae-Kyung, and Han-Gye-Rae, from 1991 to 1999. available at the website, <http://newslibrary.naver.com>

²⁴⁴ Harzig, C. and Hoerder, D. (2009). *What is migration history*. UK: Polity press, 2009.

However, the businesses deal with the limited number of Korean customers, so that Korean immigrants have experienced economic difficulties in Cape Town.

[M]y husband has struggled to make money after migration.....The business is slow and the income level is too low that we could not live with that income even if we got a job..... I have seen many Korean immigrants who returned to Korea after spending all the money they brought with. I thank God to my circumstance....even though it is uncertain.

- Mrs. Jeong

[S]outh Africa is where 20th century and 21st century coexist. Wealthy people live in 21st century and poor people live in 20th century. Although Korean immigrants bring some new items for their business to Cape Town it does not appeal to both wealthy and poor people. Koreans who immigrate to South Africa were usually of a middle-class and they could not imagine they should run a business for poor people in 20th century. Also wealthy white people in 21st century are conservative and they do not want to deal with Asians.

- Mrs. Ji

As was discussed in the previous section, my informants felt generally accepted in white majority neighborhoods. However, in business settings, immigrants felt excluded by South Africans. My interviewees said that when money was not involved (white) South Africans were benevolent towards immigrants.

[W]hite South Africans are exclusive and society has become more insular after democratization. I understand that they (white) should unite by themselves to survive in the black majority government....I feel this exclusion recently while I run a business. Although my service and price are competitive, white people do not come. Why? They go to a store where fellow white runs even though the price is high and the quality is low.

- Mr. Cheon

[I] have repaired cars for two years here and made profits from last year....even though it is far from the income I made in Korea....South Africa, especially Cape Town is not a place for business...I do not know about Johannesburg...but in Cape Town, market is too small...

- Mr. Kyung

According to Chung, most Koreans are very task-oriented and tend to evaluate people according to what they have achieved in society.²⁴⁵ Therefore, Korean immigrants might suffer from a success syndrome which measures their success only in terms of economic prosperity. My subjects noted that they knew that it would be difficult to get a job or do business where the language and culture are totally different from what they are used to in Korea. Nevertheless, they have imagined economic opportunities in South Africa. My survey results corroborate this pull factor, demonstrating how 30 per cent of households said the primary motivation of their migration was the pursuit of business opportunities.

²⁴⁵ Chung, KC. (2005). Masters thesis. 'The missionary strategy of Korean churches in South Africa', University of Pretoria.

However, my respondents did not feel that the dreams that had motivated their migration had been realized. They felt relatively poor in comparison to their friends in Korea, where economic opportunities are more readily available than in Cape Town. I think this uncertainty in immigrants' means of livelihood contributed towards the shame many seemed to display during interviews. Their shame about their decision illustrates the incompleteness of their present life-projects in terms of financial income. As a result, some immigrants returned to Korea in pursuit of more economic security. As Inglehart points out, material needs must be fulfilled before other needs can be met.²⁴⁶

While some have returned to Korea, others have remained after their life-projects panned out successfully. Some interviewees recognized that there was increasing awareness among Koreans (in Korea) of South Africa as a destination for tourism and learning English, based on positive reviews from those still living here.

[I] can see a possibility in Cape Town. I could find a new dream after I came here. I have dreamed of an education business here. I hope I could start a boarding language institute for Korean students.....there is no direct flight between the two countries. So, there have been few exchanges so far. But I believe that in the near future exchanges between the two countries will be expanded.

- Mr. Bae

²⁴⁶ Inglehart, R. (2000). Globalization and postmodern values. *The Washington quarterly*, 23 (1): 215-228.

As Table 4 shows, the number of Korean tourists and students coming to South Africa has been gradually increasing since the mid 2000s. This, in turn, creates more business opportunities for some Korean immigrants because they engaged in business dealing with Korean visitors.

[Table 4] Statistics of Korean visitors and students to South Africa²⁴⁷

Year	2005	2006	2007
Number of visitors	15,394	17,405	21,196
Number of students	738	772	751

This increase can be explained through many of the positive reviews I received from my respondents. Some pointed towards the advantage of how small businesses in Cape Town allowed them more time for family activities. Considering their migration decision, Korean immigrants must have imagined that their life in South African would provide more spare time. In that sense, they fulfilled what they wanted to have in South Africa.

[I] have much time here and after I finished my work at five I spend time with my family....If I were in Korea, I might have been richer and buying an apartment at this time of my life. But I had spent more time with my kids when they were one and two years old. My goal was to read my kids ten books a day and I did it....If I worked in Korea, I could not have spent time with my kids. I appreciate that.

- Mrs. Jeong

²⁴⁷ According to the Korean embassy in South Africa, the statistics is provided by the South African statistics services. Available at the website, <http://zaf.mofat.go.kr>

[M]y children can speak Korean even though they were born here. The second generation of immigrants in the United States usually does not speak Korean because the couple should work for a living. They do not have time for their children. But it does not happen here. I spend so much time with my children so that my kids can speak Korean. I love not living in a harsh world...

- Mrs. Han

Migrant literature explains that some people's reasons for living in a chosen society is because "this country has given me the possibility to live the way I like and this is why I like this country."²⁴⁸ For Korean immigrants in Cape Town, when they succeed in maintaining their material needs, they enjoy spending much more spare time with family.

In short, Korean immigrants encountered exclusion from the business opportunities in Cape Town due to language and cultural differences and discrimination and that made them engage in small ethnic businesses, such as businesses related Korean tourists and students. Immigrants have adjusted their life-projects in terms of livelihood in their given environments, with some succeeding.

²⁴⁸ Harzig, C. and Hoerder, D. (2009). *What is migration history*. UK: Polity press, p. 141

7.3. Children who feel secure in school

Many children of Korean immigrants have been relocated to South Africa as a result of their parents' decisions. Their parents advised them about studying in South Africa where they could improve their English. None of my subjects said that their children disagreed with their decision. According to the survey data, the mean age at migration of the first child was nine, the second seven, and the third four. Considering their young age, it might be true that they did not openly object to their parents' decision on migration.

Many parents were satisfied with their children's education in South Africa. In addition to the improvement in English, they perceived education in South Africa to be holistic to some extent which Merton argues is to help the student to recognize and develop herself/himself.²⁴⁹ Martin describes this further by stating:

*[A]t its most general level, what distinguishes holistic education from other forms of education are its goals, its attention to experiential learning, and the significance that it places on relationships and primary human values within the learning environment.*²⁵⁰

Considering the personal values Korean immigrants pursued in South Africa, they might be satisfied with the education if it prioritized forming the moral character of

²⁴⁹ Wilkie, R. (1990), Thomas Merton and the Education of the whole person/Moral education, *Educational studies*: 489-497.

²⁵⁰ Martin, R.A. (2000). Paths of learning: an introduction to educational alternatives, USA: The foundation for educational renewal, Retrieved from http://www.ratical.org/many_worlds/PoL.html.

students, assisting students to discover themselves.

Korean education, in contrast, provides only mono-directional education in which the goal is good performance in major subjects such as the Korean language, mathematics and English. The sole purpose is to enter a highly competitive university. However, not everybody can succeed in this system leading some parents to seek other opportunities. One of which might be fluency in English.

From my data, it is certainly clear that learning English was one of the initial goals of immigration to Cape Town. However, over time, what parents really appreciate is something beyond language acquisition. The diversity that their children encounter at school is highly valued by Korean parents, since it contributes to their child's emotional intelligence.

[I] really like the education in South Africa.....I have been looking for the best school in South Africa and my children have had the best education here. I think the quality of education in arts and in sports here is much better than that of Korea. But academic work is somewhat slack.

- Mrs. Kyung

[T]eachers and fellow students were receiving my children with benevolence when we went to school at first. The atmosphere was competitive and fellow students were envious when someone did well in Korea, but here if someone did well, fellow students encouraged them. South African students tried to help a new student from another country. They did not consider whether the new student were rich or not. I liked those things.

- Mrs. Lee

[T]he reason we could come here was my daughter's math scores. If my daughter studied very well in Korea, we would not come to South Africa.....But after we came to study here my daughter could trust more in her own ability throughout various school activities....Also I like my daughter's friends here. They had a strict upbringing from parents and they are matured and study well.

- Mrs. Heo

Korean immigrants in South Africa discovered that some South African schools which Korean immigrants have chosen such as Westerford and Grove, not only provide diverse activities to encourage students to recognize themselves, but also provide a learning environment which prioritizes relationships and primary human values such as loving and being. The environment is much less competitive, such that Korean immigrants' children feel secure when they are in school.

Nevertheless, some parents have sent their children to the United States, Britain, or Korea for university education. Among 17 households that I interviewed, 6 have already sent their children to other countries and 3 are considering it. How can we understand this inconsistency between thinking and behaving?

According to An, Korean middle-class families utilize transnational migration to the United States as a means of social reproduction of their children.²⁵¹ Korean immigration to South Africa cannot solely be understood as an escape from the harsh

²⁵¹ An, S.H. (2009). Learning US history in an age of globalization and transnational migration, *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 41 (6): 763-787, p. 764

education environment in Korea. Rather, they regard education as an investment in their children's future career in the market. That is why Korean immigrants send their children to the bigger market for tertiary education, even though they value primary and secondary education in South Africa.

Conclusion

Most of the Korean immigrants that I spoke to noticed an improvement in their quality of life in South African society, extending their stay as a result. Although this quality of life may be rooted in a history of ethnic exclusions in South Africa, Korean immigrants still highly appreciate the lifestyle in the *little Europe in Africa*.

In addition, while some immigrants struggled to earn money because of language, cultural differences and exclusion, others discovered a means of livelihood, mostly in small ethnic businesses. They could spend more time with family and do what they wanted to after work. However, people who did not find a means of livelihood returned to Korea or other countries.

Lastly, migrating children and the second generation of immigrants could study in a more secure environment in South Africa. With the various activities in school, some children gain greater trust in their own abilities, finding their own niche.

Nevertheless, tertiary education for these children is still more commonly sought outside of South Africa, in the bigger markets of the US and Britain.

CHAPTER 8. Differences: Life experiences with local people

8.1. Language, cultural differences and racial discrimination

According to Berry, acculturation is the phenomena of sequential psychological changes as a result of continuous and direct contact between individuals having different cultures.²⁵² Therefore, acculturation is believed to be an important factor relating to immigrants' mental health.²⁵³ My respondents had difficulties learning a new language and adapting to a new culture.²⁵⁴ Mrs. Yeon immigrated to Cape Town in 2006 and still feels difficulties.

[I] wanted to meet many local South Africans when I first came here. So, I actively talked to them at first but I could not say what I wanted to tell them (due to the lack of language fluency). Then I became unwilling to talk to local people and it became hard to make friends here....It is painful when I cannot speak what I want to say.....Also, local people very often say 'thank you and sorry' but I am not familiar to say those words. A person said sorry to me when he was in the way I was going to. Then I was forced to respond to it but I could not say 'sorry' because I have not said 'sorry' so far in that case. What should I say? I did not do wrong to say 'sorry.' Those kinds of thought came into my mind....It is very uncomfortable, emotional uncomfortable. (laugh).

- Mrs. Yeon

²⁵² Kim, E., Seo, K. and Cain, K.C. (2010). Bi-Dimensional Acculturation and Cultural Response Set in CES-D among Korean Immigrants, *Mental Health Nursing*, 31:576–583.

²⁵³ Ibid

²⁵⁴ According to Kim, Seo and Cain (2010), Korean immigrants suffered from a depression due to the difficulties they faced in immigration life.

Even though they are competent in a new language to some extent, it does not mean that they do not feel different from South Africans. The first difference most commonly detected by my subjects was physical appearance.

[W]e cannot avoid becoming passive and feeling differences. My kids were brought up in a very good environment however, in the white majority school, they became passive, quieter and sensed the differences.....we have a different face.

- Mrs. Han

[W]e cannot be assimilated in the (South African) society because we have a different face.

- Mr. Kyung

Research shows that acculturation processes can often extend over three generations.²⁵⁵ Therefore, it is very difficult for the first-generation Korean immigrants that I interviewed to adapt to a new environment and to feel at home in South Africa in their lifetime. Some female immigrants have experienced language and cultural differences so severely and that they reported 'shrinking', feeling small and powerless when they encountered South Africans. As a result, and as Tangney argues in the Chapter 4.2, some female Korean immigrants became passive, and wanted to hide from South Africans.

²⁵⁵ Harzig, C. and Hoerder, D. (2009). *What is migration history*. UK: Polity press, p. 103

Male immigrants were less familiar with expressing their emotions, but as was discussed in the Chapter 7.2, some experienced exclusion from business opportunities. That was why many immigrants engaged in small ethnic businesses in Cape Town. Mr. Cheon points out his experience of hardship in a different culture by saying, *“I could not help but feel a wall, a barrier, a limit when I meet local South Africans over time. Thus I usually meet fellow Koreans.”*

Interestingly, however, most interviewees did not find racial discrimination to be a serious issue in South Africa. Rather, they acknowledge racial discrimination as a *fait accompli*.

[I] could not remember any racial discrimination. If there were I could remember....But the racial discrimination in the United States is severe. I was really offended. My son studies in the United States so I could compare both countries.

- Mrs. Seok

[I] am sorry for my children when it comes to racial discrimination. I heard that some fellow students teased my children saying ‘Chinese, Chinese’ making themselves slanted eyes. But I believe that it is better to live here because South Africa is more multi ethnic society than the United States or Canada.

- Mrs. Jeong

On the whole, Korean immigrants in South Africa recognized racial discrimination towards them in various forms implicitly and explicitly. That said, they do not think that the racial discrimination they experience is a significant issue for them.

Rather, they justify South African society comparing it to American society. My interviewees referred to the South African education their children have as holistic, but simultaneously indicate that their children *have* suffered mockery by fellow students. How can we understand this inconsistency? Why do immigrants remain in Cape Town even though they feel alienation and exclusion? What do they perceive to be ‘a better life’?

Homi Bhabha thought about culture and cultural differences deeply as a result of his experiences in Oxford as an Indian student, using the term ‘third space’.²⁵⁶ He argues that in the ‘third space’, people are free to negotiate and translate their cultural identities in a discontinuous temporality of cultural difference.²⁵⁷ According to him, there is no primordial unity or fixity in culture and it is impossible for immigrants to understand the existing culture wholly, therefore they are supposed to negotiate and to translate themselves.²⁵⁸

I argue that Korean immigrants have negotiated with antagonistic and contradictory circumstances in their lives in South Africa while consistently pursuing a better life. Immigrants recognize differences and discrimination in various forms in a host society, such as language, physical appearance and culture. However, at the same

²⁵⁶ Bhabha, H. K. (1994). *The location of culture*. London: Routledge, p. 38

²⁵⁷ Ibid

²⁵⁸ Ibid

time, they enjoy their lives in the new society where other circumstances are better than they would have been at home. These features include housing, natural environment, quality of life and their children's education.

Through negotiation, Korean immigrants created a 'third space' where two different societies exist in the same geographical space and cross the borderlines between the two when they wanted. Korean immigrants put themselves in a specific South African society where they could get the best of both worlds. In this society, they experienced progress by learning a new language, lifestyles, ethics and attitudes of South Africans. Immigrants also created a specific Korean community in South Africa where they eat Korean food, watch Korean TV programs via satellite broadcasting, meet fellow immigrants and attend Korean churches. They can do all this while being free from the pressures and expectations of Korean society. They have found solace in this 'third space' when they felt tensions and contradictions in their migration lives so far.

Nonetheless, most of the immigrants I spoke to could not help but feel shame when they talked about their lives, because of these intrinsic inconsistencies. As discussed in Chapter 4.4, telling a life story is a process of self-justification and revealing one's ambition, aspirations and hopes. My South African readers might already notice that the attractions and values of South African society, which Korean

immigrants have perceived, are seen through a very romanticized lens. I believe that my interviewees justify themselves and their lives by magnifying the advantages of living in South Africa, while simultaneously understating of the disadvantages. As Portelli argues in Chapter 4.4, memory is not a passive repository of facts, but an active process of creating meaning and justification for the life choices made in the past.

8.2. Future uncertainties

Korean immigrants, who wanted to escape from the society in which material values are still dominant goals, discovered 'post-material' values during their time in South Africa. However, immigrants recognized the gap between South African and Korean society and they compare gains and losses in their lives. Some interviewees emphasized the gains, while others seemed more focused on the losses.

[I]n terms of the quality of life, it was under standard in Korea but here I could enjoy my life. I have been escaped from the hectic conditions in Korea.... Surely if I were in Korea I would earn more money, but here I did not have to work very busily but I could maintain a livelihood. Since I came here, I could spend more time with my family....however, I cannot afford to buy even an apartment in Korea if I sold all the properties here. Economically I am much behind friends in Korea but...I do not regret it. I have had much time here. I have done what I wanted to do.

- Mr. Cheon

[E]verybody is labeled in Korean society. What they do for a living and which university they attended are very important to mingle with people. I was very unhappy with that because I could not belong to anywhere. I was a hairdresser who dropped out of university.....I felt loneliness in Korea.....So I like living abroad....It is much more comfortable and free for me to live. Although I do not make much money (laugh) I feel comfortable here.

- Mrs. Ha

Even though many of my subjects seemed satisfied with their lives in Cape Town, some of them felt nervous when they talked about their futures in South Africa. Reasons for their anxiety varied from the lack of social welfare systems in the country, to income shortage. However, it appears that the major concern is the feeling of alienation from both societies.

Even though immigrants discovered 'post-material' values, fulfilling their needs for loving or relating and being, at the same time, they felt quite segregated from South Africans. Immigrants did not think that they could be ever fully assimilated into the host society.

For many migrants from developing countries, the final destination of their migration was commonly the United States.²⁵⁹ Singh argues that skilled Indian labor forces in South Africa wanted to migrate to the United States or countries such as

²⁵⁹ Singh, A. (2008). South African Indian migration in the twenty-first century: towards a theory of triple identity. *Asian Ethnicity*, 9 (1): 5–16.

Britain, Australia, Canada or New Zealand.²⁶⁰ My interviewees might feel the same way as these Indians in South Africa. Some early Korean immigrants in South Africa migrated to the US and a few of my interviewees intend to migrate to the US.

However, the majority of my informants did not want to migrate to the US like Mr. Nam who said, *“I would like to live as a middle-class in South Africa rather than as a lower-class in the US.”* However, beyond getting an education for their children, most of my respondents felt that they ought not to stay in South Africa after that. Opportunities of being a middle class are not perceived for their children because, as Singh points out, the escalating levels of violence throughout the country, government corruption and ineptitude, turmoil within the ruling African National Congress (ANC), and affirmative action, are all significant barriers.²⁶¹

In addition, even though they voluntarily left Korea, they feel alienated when they hear from their family and friends in Korea, who are more economically prosperous. There is also a strong emotional attachment to home. My survey result shows that 85 percent of my informants said that they belonged in Korea rather than South Africa. My interviewees also maintained a strong Korean identity like Mr. Min who was asking, *“How could a Korean become a South African?”*

²⁶⁰ Ibid

²⁶¹ Ibid

Korean immigrants in South Africa have therefore created a different sense of themselves within this 'third space' and remained steadfast that they enjoy a higher quality of life in South Africa compared to Korea. However, this third space is not really recognized by those outside of it, which contributes to the dual alienation immigrants feel, both from their host and home societies.

Conrad refers to colonial experiences of an Englishman in a new world as an act of living in the midst of the 'incomprehensible'.²⁶² Bhabha expands this notion to include thoughts on migration and dwelling of diasporas. This 'incomprehensible' is mutual because immigrants cannot understand the host society wholly and vice versa. Korean immigrants in South Africa achieved something important in their lives because they found a new way of life in pursuing 'a better life', but at the same time, this 'better life' remains unrecognized by both societies. The better life of immigrants is based on a fragile ground, which cannot be sustained without their continuous justification of their lives.

As Bhabha describes, the crossing of cultural frontiers permits freedom for immigrants from the self in a society with which they are discontented, but migration

²⁶² Bhabha, H. K. (1994). *The location of culture*. London: Routledge, p. 215 and Conrad, J. (2008). *Heart of Darkness and other tales*. Oxford: Oxford University press, p. 106

only changes the surface of the soul, preserving identity under its protean forms.²⁶³

Indeed, there is certainly a self-reported freedom that Korean immigrants found in South Africa. They were not labeled as any group because they were new arrivals in South Africa. As Mrs. Ha said, immigrants rather felt exclusion and loneliness in Korea, not in South Africa. She could speak the Korean language fluently and knew Korean culture deeply, yet she did not think that she belonged to the society. But here, even though immigrants experienced some forms of exclusion, they felt free to create a 'third space'. As a result of this third space, my survey result says that 61 percent of immigrant households are satisfied or highly satisfied with their lives in South Africa.

Nevertheless, immigrants still strongly identify as Koreans. As a result, immigrants cannot avoid feeling alienation from the both societies, contributing towards their nervousness about their future lives in South Africa. Many immigrants have not decided yet whether to live in South Africa permanently or to return to Korea. Many felt unclear, postponing this decision to the future.

²⁶³ Ibid

CHAPTER 9. Conclusion

Before I conclude my study, I should concede that this research is limited to a very small sample and to a specific region of South Africa. Therefore, I am not going to argue that this study is objectively true for all Korean migration to South Africa. Nevertheless, I believe that this study contributes, to some degree, to our understanding of the experiences of Korean immigrants in South Africa.

This study demonstrates that Korean immigrants are not a homogeneous group of people, but have different backgrounds, motivations and hopes. However, they all seemed to have shared agonies in their lives in Korea, suffering from insecurity of jobs and long working hours. They all reported distortions of relationship with people, excessive competition and social prejudices in their home country as well.

Koreans migrated to South Africa with various aims such as economic opportunities, extended study, children's education and missionary work. However, the most important factor was English language. Immigrants came to Cape Town with a plan to educate their children in English, but, without a plan for future income, the attitude became "*let us leave first and then think about what to do.*" They refer to this as an '*improvised plan*' because they were fascinated by their first impressions of South

African society and immediately decided to migrate after the first visit.

Korean immigrants perceived Cape Town as a '*little Europe in Africa*' before migration. Their notion of Europe in the context of South African society seems not much changed, even after the democratization. Since South Africa was industrialized far earlier than Korea, at the expense of the black majority, white South Africans have developed 'post-material' values such as spending more time on relationships with others, pursuing a meaningful working life and emphasizing quality of life. Korean immigrants, especially those who arrived during Apartheid, have generally aimed to emulate these lifestyles. As a result, most extended their stay to achieve these goals.

In addition, immigrants perceived South African education as holistic to some extent, in that it provides diverse activities to help students to discover themselves. It also boasts a safe and secure learning environment, assisting students with developing mature attitudes. Therefore, Korean immigrants in South Africa not only achieved the initial goal of the language acquisition, but also succeeded in educating their children to be well-rounded individuals.

Despite these clear benefits, the uncertainties of their post-migration life-projects in South Africa due to the differences in physical appearances, language and culture have eroded some immigrants' self-image. Some immigrants felt small and

powerless and others felt a wall, or barrier, in South African society. These differences and exclusions inspired immigrants to create a 'third space' for themselves, allowing them to develop and experience a freer life-style in South Africa. Immigrants have learned the local lifestyle from South Africans, which involves greater tolerance towards others and a slower pace of life. At the same time, they created a Korean community where they felt relieved from the tensions and contradictions of their migrant lives, which can be described as the act of living in the midst of the 'incomprehensible'. Through these experiences, immigrants convinced themselves that they fulfilled what they desired in their lives in South Africa.

Most interviewees seemed to have their own profit-and-loss statement in mind and gains are related to the quality of life concerns, such as time for leisure and good relationships with family and others. Losses refer to the economic prosperity and/or scarcity. Even though immigrants were mostly satisfied with their post-migration lives in South Africa, some sent their children to a bigger market, such as the United States, Britain or Korea, for future prosperity. Immigrants were also largely uncertain about their family's future in South Africa. They feel alienation from both societies because what they have achieved is not easily recognized or understood by those outside of their situation.

Many immigrants have not yet decided whether to settle in South Africa or to return to Korea. Therefore, this study concludes that migration to South Africa has been part of immigrants' journey in search of a better life or a meaning for themselves, which is still very much in progress.

This research is coming to an end after descriptions and interpretations of immigrants' lives in South Africa throughout reviewing literature, the oral history interviews and the survey. The research is limited to analyzing first-generation immigrants. Therefore, future research may uncover different stories, which this study did not include, by investigating second-generation Korean immigrants in South Africa. Will these findings be similar, or different? Will second-generation Korean immigrants feel they belong to South Africa rather than Korea?

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[APPENDIX]

A. Interview guide

<Basic information>

- Can you tell me your age?
- Tell me about your family.
- Have you lived any other countries except Korea before you came here?
- Where did you live before you came here?
- Can you tell me about where you lived before came here?

<First coming moments in South Africa>

- When have you come to Cape Town? Or to South Africa?
- Whom have you come with?
- Can you describe your experiences of first arriving in Cape Town and South Africa?

<Life in Cape Town>

- What do you do?
- Can you tell me about your everyday life in Cape Town?

<Confrontation of local people>

- Do you have South African friends?
- How have you met them?
- Do you rely on your South African friends when you face difficulties?
- How do you describe your friendship with local friends?

<Neighbour and neighborhood>

- Do you know who your neighbors are?
- How do you feel about your neighbors?
- Do you think that they treat you as their neighbor?
- Are you satisfied with your neighborhood?
- How did you find out your place?
- Are you satisfied with your place?
- Can you tell me why are you satisfied with your place and neighborhood?
- Do you own your house in Cape Town?

- If not, how have you felt about your house owner?
- How many times have you moved after your immigration?
- How did you feel when you moved? Was it difficult?

<Leisure and social activities>

- How do you spend your leisure time in Cape Town?
- Do you participate in local social activities in Cape Town such as a walking group, a volunteer group, or a charity?
- How have you participated in the activities?
- How often do you participate in cultural activities in Cape Town such as concerts, performances, and sports?
- How do you get information about cultural events?

<Cultural difference>

- Can you tell me about the time when you feel cultural differences in Cape Town?
- How do you deal with the differences? Do you actively deal with them or do you avoid dealing with them?
- Can you tell me about your life experiences in Cape Town where the language and the culture are different from your own?

<Human capital>

- Can you tell me about your educational background?
- Did you speak English well before you came here?
- Have you experienced any language difficulties since you came here?
- Did your family members speak English well before they came here?
- How have you dealt with the language differences?

<Background knowledge>

- How did you know about South Africa?
- Can you tell me to what extent did you know about South Africa?
- Have you known about the history of South Africa, especially about the apartheid before you came here?
- Have the history of South Africa affected your decision on immigration?

<Motivation>

- Can you tell me about the time when you first thought about an immigration?

- Who proposed the idea of immigration for the first time?
- What motivated you to immigrate to South Africa?
- What did motivate you the most at your immigration?
- Did you know someone who has immigrated to other country near you before you decided the immigration?
- Did their experience influence to your decision on immigration?
- Did you know someone who has immigrated to South Africa?
- What did they say to you about their immigration?
- Did they affect your decision on migration?
- Tell me more about how their experience has influenced on your decision.

<Decision-making>

- Did you fully discuss the immigration with all of your family members before the decision?
- Did all members agree to the immigration?
- Who agreed and who disagreed to the immigration?
- Can you tell me the reason why they disagreed to the immigration?
- How did you persuade your family members who disagreed to the immigration?
- How your parents and other family members respond to the immigration?
- How did your friends and colleagues respond to your decision on migration?
- Did you hesitate to immigrate due to the responses from your friends and colleagues?
- What do you think of their advice now?
- How long did you plan to stay in Cape Town when you decided to come here?
(A permanent residence or a temporary stay)
- Have the plan been changed?
- Can you tell me the reason why the plan has been changed?

<Preparation>

- Can you tell me about the process of your immigration?
- What kind of visa or permit did you have when you first came here?
- Has it been difficult to get the visa or the permit from the South African immigration authority?
- Can you tell me what kind of visa or permit do you have now?
- Were there any difficulties you experienced when you processed your immigration in Korea?

- How did you collect information about South Africa and Cape Town?

<Family economy>

- What was your job in Korea?
- Was it a high-income job?
- Did your family belong to a high-income class in Korea?
- Did any of your family members have a job in Korea?
- Has it been difficult to decide to immigrate to South Africa because of your or your partner's job?
- Can you tell me how much money has you invested to your immigration?
- How has your investment worked?
- Have you thought about an opportunity cost to your investment?
- How did you envisage life in South Africa before you came here?
- Does your immigration live up to your expectation?
- Can you tell me more details on in which aspect it live up to your expectation?

<Adaptation>

- Can you tell me about the story of your adaptation to a new environment?
- How did you feel? Did you feel that they were acceptable?
- Do you know how your partner felt when (s)he tried to adapt to a new environment?
- Do you know how your children have adapted to a new environment?
- Have your children told you or your partner any complaints about their life in Cape Town?
- Tell me about their complaints.
- How could you resolve their complaints?
- Do you think they are happy now?
- What do your children like about living in Cape Town?

<Network>

- Have you met any Korean network in Cape Town?
- Can you tell me about the network?
- How many Koreans are there in the network?
- How often do you take part in the network?
- Do you have any position at the network?
- Do your family members also take part in any Korean network in Cape Town?

- How do you feel about Korean networks in Cape Town?
- Have the people in the network helped you to overcome the difficulties you have had in Cape Town?
- Have you contacted the network before you came here?
- Can you tell me how did you know it before you came here?
- Has it affected to your decision on immigration?
- Tell me about its influence to your migration.

<Identity>

- How do you label your identity in Cape Town?
- Can you tell me about your feeling of your belonging on in Cape Town?
- Can you tell me what makes you feel in that way?
- How have you been recognized by local people? Have you been recognized as Korean, Chinese, or Japanese?
- How did you feel about that?
- Do you know how your children consider their identities in Cape Town?
- Do they feel that they belong in South Africa?
- How do you feel about their recognitions?

<Racial difference>

- Have you experienced any kind of racial discrimination while you are staying in Cape Town?
- Can you tell me about your experience?
- How did you feel when you experienced the racial discrimination?
- Have you heard of any racial discrimination experienced by your children or partner?
- Can you tell me about their experience?
- How did you feel when you heard them?
- Have you heard about xenophobic crisis in 2008 in South Africa? How did you feel it?
- Do you think that kind of experience is typical in any other countries?
- Do you think it is unique in Cape Town?
- Is your idea related to your living experience in other countries except Korea?
- How have you felt about South African society comparing to your notion on it before you came here?

<Education>

- Tell me about your children' education.
- How did you find out a school where your children study?
- Have it been difficult to find out a right school for your children?
- How do you think about the education in Cape Town?
- Do you know how your children think about their school life?
- Do you satisfy with your children's education in Cape Town comparing to that of in Korea?
- Can you tell me more about what satisfy you to your children's education?
- Have you heard any complaints from your children about their school life?
- How did you resolve their complaints?
- Do you think your children have adapted to the in school life?
- Do you expect that your children do their undergraduate study in Cape Town or in South Africa?

<Family and friend in Korea>

- Have you regularly contacted families in Korea?
- Can you tell me whom do you contact regularly?
- How often do you contact them?
- Do you feel the same to them just like when you saw them in Korea?
- Have you felt any kind of alienation from Korean families and friends?
- Do you regularly visit to Korea?
- Tell me about your visit to Korea. For example, purpose, place, frequency and so forth.
- When is the last time did you visit to Korea?
- How did you feel when you visit Korea?
- Has there been anyone who has immigrated to South Africa due to your influence?
- How many people have come to live in Cape Town?

<Split structured family>

- What do you do to narrow a gap with the family member who is left in Korea?
- Have you experienced any trouble because of it?
- How do your children feel about the family member?

<Assessment>

- How have you experienced your immigration in Cape Town so far?
- What makes you happy and unhappy living in Cape Town?
- What does the immigration mean to your life?
- Have you thought about further immigration to other countries?
- Do you plan to go back to Korea to live in future?

University of Cape Town

6. What motivate you to immigrate to Cape Town? (Please prioritize in the right blanks if you chose more than two answers)

- ① sent by organizations such as companies, government, NGOs, and others []
- ② in search of business opportunities []
- ③ to complete an extended study of head of family or spouse/partner []
- ④ for children' education in English []
- ⑤ frustration and dissatisfaction of life in Korean society []
- ⑥ to enjoy leisurely life after retirement []
- ⑦ any other reasons

7. How have you experienced your immigration to Cape Town so far?

- ① highly satisfied ② satisfied ③ neutral ④ dissatisfied ⑤ highly dissatisfied

8. Do you expect to live in Cape Town or in South Africa permanently?

Yes [] No [] Nothing planned []

8-1. If no, do you have plans to re-immigrate to Korea? Yes [] No []

8-1-1. If yes, when do you plan to re-immigrate to Korea? [] ex. Year

9. How do you describe your identity in South Africa?

- ① South African from Korea ② Korean living in South Africa ③ Cosmopolitan
- ④ I have not thought about it
- ⑤ any other terms/labels

Thank you for your participation of the survey.

C. Interviewees

Note: 'Place' refers to where the interview occurred. All interviews took place during 2011. 'Name' is alias name for protecting my interviewee's privacy.

Number	Name	Year of migration	Place	Date	Length
1	Mr. Cheon	1990	Plaatkloof	12 Apr	55 mins
2	Mr. Min	1990	Plaatkloof	24 Aug	1 hour 11 mins (Not Archived)
3	Mr. & Mrs. Han	1991	Claremont	5 Sep	1 hour 48 mins
4	Mr. & Mrs. Seok	1999	Century city	14 May	1 hour 20 mins
5	Mrs. Ji	2000	Pinelands	27 Oct	43 mins
6	Mrs. Lee	2000	Somerset West	24 Aug	19 mins
7	Mr. & Mrs. Kyung	2002, 2004	Pinelands	6 May	1 hour 16 mins
8	Mrs. Ha	2004	Observatory	1 Sep	57 mins
9	Mr. Jin	2004	Observatory	28 Oct	56 mins
10	Mr. Bang	2005	Somerset West	23 Aug	26 mins
11	Mrs. Jeong	2005	Pinelands	24 Oct	51 mins
12	Mrs. Kim	2005	Pinelands	28 Jul	59 mins
13	Mrs. Yeon	2006	Observatory	28 Oct	46 mins
14	Mr. & Mrs. Bae	2009	Durbanville	19 Aug	1 hour 9 mins
15	Mrs. & Ms. Heo	2009	Tokai	8 Sep	26 mins
16	Mr. Nam	2009	Durbanville	17 Oct	42 mins
17	Mrs. Hwang	2009	Pinelands	31 Mar	1 hour 1 min
18	Mr. Jeong	1987	Paarden Eiland	17 Mar	Not recorded
19	Mrs. Jeong	1987	Paarden Eiland	19 Sep	Not recorded
20	Mr. Lee	2002	Mowbray	11 Jul	Not recorded
21	Mr. Lee, C	2004	Somerset West	12 Aug	Not recorded
22	Mr. Hu	2008	Pinelands	14 Aug	Not recorded